THE

FAIR CAMBRIANS.

VOL. II.

BRITISH MUSEUM
31 OCT 56

Kerosteman

THE

FAIR CAMBRIANS.

A NOVEL.

La Beauté de L'Esprit surpasse
Infiniment celle du corps.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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FAIR CAMBRIANS.

CHAPTER X.

CONTAINS VARIOUS MATTER; AND CONCLUDES WITH AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT.

MRS. Harley had left a meſſage with Maria's maid, the preceding evening, begging to be favoured with her company in her dreſſing room as ſoon as ſhe roſe. The invitation was complied with; but Maria did not enter with her uſual alacrity; a ſullen frown ſat on her brow, which was ſcarce leſſened by the careſſes profuſely beſtowed upon her by

the widow, who pretended ſhe had ſcarce ſlept during the whole night, ſo greatly had the recent mortification of her dear friend affected her. " I certainly ought to eſteem myſelf much obliged to your good-nature," cried Maria, throwing herſelf on a chair; " but there is ſomething in my ſoul that diſdains to find conſolation in the compaſſion of its aſſociates; it is not pity that I want."

" How I admire that greatneſs of mind," anſwered Mrs. Harley, " that towering ſpirit, which renders you ſo ſuperior to every other woman! nature never intended that you ſhould play an under part in the drama of life; and we muſt find ſome means of giving that freedom to your actions, which your age and underſtanding requires. Nay, I am convinced your very life depends upon the recovery of your liberty. How ſunk are

thoſe

thoſe eyes, which, laſt night, ſhone with a luſtre ſo dazzling! and how pale, how altered that complexion, which even your cool ſiſter looked upon with envy! O, my dear, did ſhe not fear you as a rival, and equal ſharer in her ample fortune, ſhe would never have been ſo negligent, ſo careleſs of your good and happineſs laſt night!"

"NAY," interrupted Maria, "laſt night ſhe ſurely felt for my diſtreſs; the tears roſe in her eyes as ſhe ſpoke to me."

"MERE artifice, I aſſure you; ſhe never was ſo lively, ſo brilliant, ſo attractive, as, from the inſtant you left us, till the time we ſeparated. A ſettled gloom hung on the ſpirits of my brother during the whole evening, which I, alas! can but too well account for; and ſhe rallied him upon it moſt unmercifully: in ſhort, ſhe was the life of the whole party; and her eyes told

us ſhe thought the Courteneys left us too ſoon, though her unremitted regard to propriety of appearance would not ſuffer her to preſs their longer ſtay."

"And is it poſſible that Arabella could be ſo unfeeling?"

"Very poſſible, I aſſure you. The extreme goodneſs and ſincerity of your heart miſleads your judgment in the high opinion you have of her. Believe me, who have had ſome experience of the world, theſe ſerious, prudent ladies are always ſelfiſh and deſigning. Her ſpirits, laſt night, roſe to ſo uncommon a pitch, that ſhe was not a little diſpleaſed at poor William's gravity; and, I dare ſay, ſhe will endeavour to make him ſuffer for it by her neglect of him to-day: but if ſhe was acquainted with his real ſentiments—What would I give to be at liberty to diſcloſe them to you!"

"As

"As for that," replied Maria, "I believe you would tell me nothing new: the Major was pretty explicit laſt night."

"I REJOICE to hear it," returned the artful widow: "then he has relieved his mind from a weight that has long oppreſſed it. Yes, my charming friend, when many miles diſtant from you and him, his letters explained the ſtate of his heart to me. I ſaw, in the warm admiration he expreſſed for you, and the indignant reſentment which burſt forth againſt your tormentors, the dawnings of a paſſion, which, thus firmly rooted, I was ſenſible could end only with his life; and from which his happineſs or miſery muſt ſolely ariſe. I firſt pointed out to him the ſituation of his heart, and how ardently has he ſince wiſhed that the fortune he is certain of in future, was in his poſſeſſion, that he might offer it, and himſelf, to your acceptance;

well knowing the objections which, in his preſent ſituation, your cautious mother and ſiſter would raiſe to ſuch an alliance. But how I run on! Tell me, tell me, dearеſt Maria, what anſwer you gave to my poor William: may I hope that you will make him the happy inſtrument of your deliverance?"

"I GAVE him no anſwer. What, indeed, could I ſay? I was ſo ſurprized."

"O, DEAREST creature," ſeizing her hand, "break your fetters, and aſſert your independance: leave your grave ſiſter to moap and talk ſentiments at Beechwood Park, and, borne on the wings of love, fly to ſcenes where you were formed to ſhine pre-eminent! Methinks I ſee you lead the way at Bath, at Brighthelmſtone, every eye admiring, every tongue praiſing you!"

"You

"You draw a tempting picture," cried Maria, her countenance beginning to brighten; "but you don't conſider how many years it is before I ſhall be of age, and the ſmall pittance allotted me till that time."

"Let conſideration go with the other deſtroyers of happineſs, to the boſom of your miſerable governeſs. What a blow it would be to her! O, what glorious revenge!"

"But, ſuppoſe I were willing to conſent, what plan would your brother propoſe?"

"What plan? Why a chaiſe and four ſhall carry you to Gretna-Green; where a few ſhort moments ſhall make him the happieſt and moſt grateful of men, and you ſole arbitreſs of his conduct and your own. Then might you return—"

"No, no," interrupted Maria, "I could never ſee my mother and ſiſter after ſuch a ſtep, without the moſt painful degree of confuſion."

"WELL," cried Mrs. Harley, "ſuppoſe you were to go abroad for a few years: I will, with pleaſure, accompany you to Spa, which will be the only place to eſtabliſh your health: while there, you may open a correſpondence with your ſiſter; and when you come of age, if you do not chuſe it ſooner, you may return to your native country with *eclat*."

MARIA was going to anſwer, and, from her looks, her companion hoped not unfavourably, when they received a ſummons to breakfaſt, and went down together equally pleaſed with the converſation which has juſt been related. Arabella met them at the parlour door, and,

in

in accents the ſofteſt and moſt engaging, enquired how her ſiſter had reſted; and was beginning to lament the diſappointment of the preceding evening, and expreſs her own concern, when Maria, full of the anger and ſuſpicions which ſhe had juſt imbibed, turned coldly from her, begging that ſhe would not revive a recollection which ſhe muſt be ſenſible was painful in the extreme to her. Arabella looked both ſurprized and hurt; but was prevented from ſpeaking by Mrs. Harley, who eagerly enquired why Miſs Marſhall did not appear; and ſeemed highly delighted, when informed that the fatigue of laſt night had rendered her unable to riſe at her uſual time, and that ſhe begged to be excuſed appearing till dinner.

"As ſoon as breakfaſt was over, Mrs. Harley propoſed a walk in the Park, which was readily agreed to by her young friend;

but Arabella had for ſo many days neglected to viſit the little ſeminary which has been before mentioned, that ſhe thought it neceſſary to devote the whole morning to it, and another charitable viſit or two, which ſhe wiſhed to make. Maria had occaſionally accompanied her in theſe benevolent rounds, but never appeared greatly intereſted in them. It would therefore have been a vain effort to have ſolicited her company now, and Arabella would not give her the momentary pain of refuſing; ſo ringing for Johnſon to attend her, ſhe wiſhed them a pleaſant walk, and departed.

Mrs. Harley took care that their walk ſhould be on that ſide of the Park on which the road to the Bank lay; and, according to her hopes and expectations, ſhe beheld Sir George and the Major going towards the houſe. The moment they perceived the

the ladies, they diſmounted, and giving their horſes to their attendant, walked to meet them. The firſt ſalutations and enquiries over, the widow propoſed their going to the beautiful dell of which Arabella was ſo fond. "I long, Sir George," cried ſhe, "to have your opinion of Miſs Dorville's taſte in thoſe matters."

"I WILL attend you moſt willingly," anſwered he; "but I know not whether I can promiſe you my unbiaſſed opinion: my expectations are greatly raiſed by my knowledge of the fair projector; I feel that it would be very difficult to diſapprove any thing that ſhe has done."

"So we have nothing but dull panegyric to expect from you, I find. Do you think yourſelf equal to climbing ſo ſteep a bank?" turning to Maria.

She heſitated; and the Major, taking her hand, proteſted that ſhe ſhould not riſk the attempt; begging he might have the felicity of accompanying her on an evener path till their return. She made a faint oppoſition, which was ſoon overruled; and her delighted companion prevailing upon her to accept the aſſiſtance of his arm, they purſued their way along a ſmooth verdant turf, which bordered a beautiful winding ſtream.

Sir George and Mrs. Harley had parted from them but a few minutes, when the latter exclaimed, laughing, "I dare ſwear I can gueſs the ſubject of your contemplation; you are wondering why Miſs Dorville did not walk with us this morning."

"I will not deny that you are right in your conjectures," anſwered the Baronet, ſmiling; "and I am not without hopes that

that you will ſatisfy my curioſity on that ſubject."

"WHY that may be eaſily done. Her will and pleaſure is the only reaſon that I know of. She ſometimes prefers the company of her ſervant to mine or her ſiſter's: that happened to be the caſe this morning; and ſhe ſtrolled out, accompanied by Mrs. Johnſon, without condeſcending to aſk either of us to be of her party."

"A SOLITARY walk," replied Sir George, "(for the attendance of a ſervant is a mere matter of form,) may ſometimes be highly agreeable to a mind ſo fully ſufficient for its own entertainment as hers. No wonder that ſhe ſometimes wiſhes to retire into herſelf, when the contemplation muſt at all times afford her ſuch ſweet conſciouſneſs of virtue and benevolence."

"YES,

"YES, yes," cried Mrs. Harley, "I believe ſhe is conſcious enough of her own perfections; but I vow I ſhould be glad to diſpenſe with a few of them, if there was leſs fuſs made about the remainder."

"ARE not ſome of you ladies apt to be a little ſevere in your ſtrictures on your own ſex? If your brother was here, I think he would be able to exculpate Miſs Dorville from the heavy charges you bring againſt her."

"IF my brother was wiſe, I think, he would ceaſe to give himſelf any further trouble about her. With all that beautiful appearance of artleſs ingenuouſneſs, I am convinced ſhe is at heart the greateſt coquet in nature; and, to ſpeak without reſerve, I do not believe ſhe has, at this time, the leaſt intention of marrying William, notwithſtanding the unwearied pains ſhe has taken to attach him to her."

"Is

"Is that poſſible?" cried Sir George, eagerly; his colour riſing as he ſpoke. "Do you then think her heart is diſengaged?"

"I CANNOT anſwer for that," replied ſhe. "I believe, if ſhe is capable of giving a preference to any man, it is to him. But, foreign as it is to the character ſhe chuſes to aſſume, her paſſion is for univerſal admiration at preſent; and when ſhe marries, fortune and title will chiefly influence her. You look ſurprized and incredulous, but my words will ſhortly be confirmed by indiſputable proofs. A new lover, and one of no ſmall conſequence, is ſoon to appear at the Park; and I greatly ſuſpect her ſtrange treatment of my brother laſt night, which you could not help obſerving, was in conſequence of her having received an intimation of his approach!"

"LET

"LET me ſtill hope," cried Sir George, "that you have been miſled in your idea of her character. Sure it is impoſſible that ſhe can be the ſelfiſh, capricious being you repreſent her."

"WELL, my dear ſir," anſwered Mrs. Harley, with an affected laugh, "let it be as you wiſh; let all her imperfections be buried in the Red Sea, and let her riſe from it a ſecond Venus, faultleſs in mind, as ſhe is, indeed, in perſon."

"SUCH, ſuch," cried Sir George, paſſionately, "I do, I muſt ſtill believe her. Some unaccountable miſt has veiled your eyes when they have been directed towards her."

"O, BEWARE," replied ſhe, "that the miſt, you ſpeak of, does not affect yourſelf. Love, you know, is acknowledged

to be blind; and your partiality ſeems very nearly to border upon that paſſion."

THE Baronet remained ſilent till they entered the favourite retreat of Arabella, when Mrs. Harley enquired, in a tone of raillery, whether his encomiums were arranged, and ready to burſt forth.—He returned her only a ſlight anſwer; and was, indeed, ſcarce ſenſible that ſhe had ſpoken. The native grandure and ſimplicity of the ſcene, the venerable trees, which ſtretched their ample branches in every direction in ſuch abundance, as, in ſome places, to cauſe more the appearance of twilight than mid-day, failed to attract his notice: he was ſcarce ſenſible of the loquacity of his voluble companion, who, out of all patience with his extreme abſence of mind, was continually aſking his opinion of ſomething or other, and rallying him on his gravity. But at length he was ſuddenly

rouſed

rouſed from his deep contemplations by the path emerging from the ſolemn gloomy ſhade, which had covered it for more than a mile. He beheld the bright rays of the ſun ſhining with inconceivable ſplendor on a beautiful ſheet of water, which precipitated itſelf from a bold and craggy rock, huge projecting fragments of which, in ſeveral places, divided and broke its fall, while the careleſs birch and mountain aſh, which over-hung a part of it, cloathed, and ſoftened a ſcene which, without them, would have had too large a proportion of the terrible. He ſtood for ſome minutes loſt in admiration!

"And there let him remain," methinks I hear ſome lively female exclaim; "for he is little leſs impenetrable than the ſtones which ſurround him. To walk a mile *tête-a-tête* with a fine woman, without knowing a word ſhe ſaid to him, and

to

to approach a tremendous waterfall, without ever hearing its ſtunning noiſe, proves at leaſt an entire privation of our ſenſe; and, for a travelled man, who had beheld the great rivers of the continent daſhing down their native rocks, his amazement at the ſight of that which has been juſt deſcribed is rather extraordinary!"

In anſwer to this, I muſt remind my fair reader, in the firſt place, of the thoughtfulneſs into which he was unavoidably thrown by his converſation with Mrs. Harley, who had given him a hope that there was a poſſibility of obtaining the woman upon whom his affections were more firmly rivetted than he himſelf ſuppoſed. Upon this delightful idea his imagination would gladly have dwelt; but the malicious inſinuations which were afterwards thrown out, gave a ſevere check to his riſing hopes. He plainly ſaw that Mrs. Harley

Harley did not look upon Miſs Dorville with the eyes of friendſhip; that, on the contrary, ſhe ſeemed to take pleaſure in expoſing her ſuppoſed defects: but how could he be certain that there was no foundation for what ſhe alledged againſt her? Conſcious of the facination of perſonal attractions ſo powerful, he diſtruſted his own judgment; and reſolved, as far as in him lay, to remain an impartial inſpector of her conduct, till he could aſcertain what her temper and principles really were. He felt that the happineſs or miſery of his future life depended, in a great degree, on the diſpoſition of her whom he ſhould chuſe to be the companion of it, and dreaded to be impoſed upon by a ſpecious appearance. His own heart was candour and openneſs itſelf; and every ſpecies of concealment and duplicity his averſion. He therefore determined to aſſure himſelf ſatisfactorily, that the fair Arabella was

miſrepreſented,

miſrepreſented, before he made her the arbitreſs of his future deſtiny. In the midſt of theſe hopes, doubts, and reſolutions, can it be a matter of ſurprize, that his attention was wholly abſorbed, that the chat of his lively companion, and even the roaring of the torrent, were unheeded by him? For the laſt article of the charge, I can only ſay, to me his delight and admiration does not appear extraordinary: a ſimple roſe bud, half broken from the ſtalk, will afford, to ſome minds, matter of more intereſting contemplation, than the immenſe bouquet which glares in the boſom of a modern belle; and I have often wondered how a man of taſte ever thought of taking the *dimenſions* of a beautiful object.

Near the cataract was a ſmall natural grotto in the rock, the entrance of which was almoſt concealed by a large hanging birch,

birch, whoſe ſlender branches ſwept the ground immediately before it. A moſſy carpet ſpread over the ground, and a ſeat, compoſed of roots, was all the furniture it could boaſt. "What a delicious retreat is this!" ſaid Sir George, as he entered.

"O, GLOOMY, melancholy to exceſs," cried the Widow. "I ſwear it is enough to moap any living ſoul to ſit here alone, as Miſs Dorville does, reading, contemplating, and liſtening to the monotonous roar of that tremendous torrent. Commend me to the light of the ſun, and the ſight of my fellow-creatures. Take my word for it, theſe ladies who delight ſo infinitely in the *penſoroſo*, are but diſmal companions in a journey through life. Love is at beſt a partial madneſs, and I give you a friendly caution to beware of the melancholy kind. I proteſt your looks quite alarm me!"

"How

"How greatly am I obliged to you, dear Madam, for your condeſcending care," replied he, ſmiling, and ſqueezing her hand. "Will you add to the favour, by taking me from this dangerous place: I ſhall ſcarce have power to leave it without your aſſiſtance; there is a kind of fascination."

"O, if that be all, I will break it," catching hold of his arm. "If Miſs Dorville knew that we had been *tête-a-tête* in the grotto, ſhe would conclude—"

"THAT you had paid the uſual forfeit," cried the Baronet, ſaluting her; "and I moſt heartily thank you for reminding me of our ſituation: I might elſe have forgotten a ceremonial to which I am ſo highly indebted."

"PROVOKING,

"PROVOKING, malicious creature!" exclaimed the widow; "I will truſt myſelf no longer with you: it is thus that open, unſuſpecting tempers are taken advantage of."

"NAY, dear Madam, I hoped to have found you ſuperior to the prudiſh affectation you contemn ſo warmly. Fly not ſo faſt: but ſuffer a friendly arm to afford you ſome aſſiſtance in climbing this fatiguing ſteep."

MRS. Harley was not averſe to hearing reaſon; nor did ſhe feel herſelf mortally offended; but turning, with a ſmile, full of condeſcending ſweetneſs, accepted his offer; and, during the remainder of her walk, was highly delighted with her companion: for Sir George reſolved to endeavour, for the preſent, to baniſh thought; and was too much a man of gallantry, to

ſuffer

ſuffer a fair lady to lean upon his arm, and take every poſſible opportunity of diſplaying her attractions, without appearing, in ſome degree, ſenſible of the favour intended him.

BEFORE they reached the houſe, they were joined by the Major and Maria. Mrs. Harley turned her eyes, full of anxious expectation, on her brother, and was anſwered by a look of exultation, which fully aſſured her that all was as ſhe wiſhed. He had, indeed, made ſuch excellent uſe of his time and talents, that an elopement to Scotland was agreed upon; and every thing ſettled except the day, or rather night, when the plan was to be carried into execution; and that he hoped to prevail upon her to fix in the courſe of their next interview.

No one but the Baronet was diſpleaſed, on entering the houſe, to be informed by Mrs. Dorville, that her daughter was not yet returned from her walk. He was really diſappointed; for he ardently wiſhed for an opportunity of ſcruteniſing her every word and look with the minuteſt exactneſs, now that the piercing eye of ſuſpicion aſſiſted his natural penetration. They were politely invited to ſtay dinner; but Sir George was reluctantly obliged to own a pre-engagement at Llangorwel, where he meant to ſpend a week or two; and riſing to depart, hoped he ſhould be permitted ſtill to continue his viſits at the Park as frequently as while he was the gueſt of Mr. Berkley.

Mrs. Dorville returned a civil anſwer; and the gentlemen took their leave. Maria reminded her friend that it was time to dreſs, and they went up ſtairs together; but

but were ſcarce ſeated in Mrs. Harley's apartment, before her young companion burſt into tears; and throwing her arms round the neck of her whom ſhe ought to have caſt from her with diſdain and abhorrence, "O, Madam," ſhe cried, "I have done what I tremble to think of: I have promiſed to marry your brother in defiance of my friends, in defiance of the cenſures of the world!"

"THEN you have done right; you have acted nobly; and all the world would join with me in admiring you for it."

"AH, I would fain believe you; but there is ſomething here," laying her hand on her breaſt, "that ſpeaks another language. When I think of my mother's ſtate of health, I tremble for the conſequences of the ſhock it will give her; and poor Arabella, I know it will hurt her

beyond expreſſion. Till lately ſhe was the kindeſt of ſiſters and of friends."— Tears prevented her from proceeding. "I am grieved, my deareſt Maria," cried the widow, in the gentleſt tone; "it pains me to find that you ſee this matter in ſo falſe a light. Were you going to diſgrace yourſelf or your family, what you have ſaid, and what you feel, would be proper and natural. Were the man you have honoured with your affections, low born, low bred, or without a fortune, you might be deemed imprudent by the world: though even then, the uſage you receive, and the diſmal proſpect before you for years to come, would juſtify you to every candid heart. As to your mother, you muſt pardon me if I ſay her feelings cannot be very acute, or ſhe would put an end to thoſe ſufferings which ſhe daily and hourly ſees unmoved. Indeed, I have no doubt but a ſhort time will reconcile her

to you; and when you return to Beechwood, attended by the happy man whom you have choſen for your protector, ſhe will ſee you in a different light. Your conſequence will be as great as that of her eldeſt daughter; and ſhe will treat you with an equal degree of love and reſpect. Your ſiſter will, perhaps, be mortified to loſe one whom ſhe ſuppoſes entirely devoted to herſelf; but if, as you ſuppoſe, her heart is good, ſhe will endeavour to make the beſt of what is irretrievable, and forward your return to the utmoſt of her power."

"As to my return," replied Maria, "I am determined not to ſee England again till I am of age. We are to ſpend the intermediate ſpace in viſiting the places beſt worth ſeeing in France and Italy, ſtaying as long in each as we feel ourſelves inclined to. We have entirely ſettled that. Your

brother tells me he has connections with ſome of the firſt people in Paris, and we reſolve to paſs the next winter entirely there. I hope you like the ſcheme, for you know you offered to go with us."

"LIKE it, my dear creature! how is it poſſible that you can doubt my being delighted with a proſpect of ſpending my time with the friends I love beyond all others in the world, and in a manner indiſcribably charming! But when ſhall we ſet out? be expeditious, or I ſhall die with impatience."

BERKLEY was urgent with me to fix a day; but how can I think of it yet? I proteſt my head ſeems all confuſion: I muſt be more compoſed before I can ſettle any thing: perhaps in the courſe of the next fortnight."

"O, HEAVENS,

"O, HEAVENS, do not name ſo diſtant a period! Poor William would run mad, and I expire with vexation in half the time. Speak but the word, and a chaiſe ſhall be at the door this very night."

"STOP, ſtop! you take away my breath. It may poſſibly be ſooner than I ſaid; but I muſt not be ſo violently hurried.—You will be the companion of my flight?"

"I WOULD moſt gladly; but will it not be better for me to remain and moderate matters here? which will alſo give me an opportunity of informing you how Miſs Marſhall bears the utter deſtruction of all her hopes and wiſhes. A few days will be ſufficient for all this; and then I will fly to join and accompany you to the farthеſt corner of the globe, if you deſire it. O, Maria, what happy creatures ſhall we be! We will poſſitively do nothing but

dreſs, dance and ſing." Mrs. Harley then proceeded to paint their future enjoyments in ſuch warm and glowing colours, that the imagination of her young auditreſs was compleatly dazzled; and ſhe looked forward to their commencement with a degree of eagerneſs which reſembled her own; and might, perhaps, have been prevailed upon to fix the very time, had not the dinner bell put an end to their converſation.

As they were quite a family party, their dreſs, which neither of them had once thought of altering, was of little conſequence; and they went down in the higheſt ſpirits and good humour. Miſs Marſhall perceived the joy which brightened the countenance of her fair pupil, and all dinner time ſat ſilently conſidering how ſhe might moſt effectually and deeply cloud it. She was vexed that her own inability,

inability, or diſinclination, to purſue their uſual avocations, had given her ſo pleaſurable a morning; and as ſoon as the cloth was removed, began to reproach her for not allotting a part of it to her harpſichord. "Indeed," anſwered Maria, who felt herſelf near being independent, and was of courſe courageous, "I ſhall never ſpend more hours than I can poſſibly help in thrumming over thoſe ſtupid leſſons which you laſt ſet before me: I believe you ſelected them merely to fatigue and torment me."

"Fie, Maria!" cried Mrs. Dorville; "you are really more untractable than ever. I was in hopes the ill humour of laſt night would not have been renewed to day. All neceſſary reſtraints now appear hardſhips to you, and you think you ought to be entirely your own miſtreſs; but I am of a very different opinion; and

while you continue in this houſe, and under my direction, which you know will be till you come of age, I ſhall expect, nay inſiſt, an abſolute ſubmiſſion to whatever regulations I think proper to impoſe. Your ſiſter complied without a complaint or frown, and does in every reſpect ſuch credit to her inſtructreſs, that I am determined not to have Miſs Marſhall's plans altered or interrupted."

"I HARDLY need ſay," cried the delighted governeſs, "how very irkſome a taſk it muſt be to me to labour ſo aſſiduouſly for the advantage of one who thinks me her enemy for ſo doing, and ſhould moſt gladly ſee the ſcheme we talked of this morning put in execution."

"YES, Maria," ſaid Mrs. Dorville, "I have reſolved, if you are not ſatisfied with your manner of living here, to ſend you

to

to the convent where I was educated, and inſiſt on your remaining there at leaſt two years. It was a plan your father was very averſe to, or I ſhould have adopted it for you both. Too much liberty is the ruin of three parts of the young people of the preſent age, and is particulary dangerous to thoſe of large, independent fortunes."

"If my manner of living is to be the ſame," anſwered Maria, reſentfully, "all places are alike indifferent to me."

Mrs. Dorville, who could ill bear the ſlighteſt oppoſition, was highly provoked, and ordered her to withdraw into the library. Arabella roſe inſtantly to follow her, but ſhe inſiſted on her ſtay. "Let her conſider a little of what I have ſaid," cried ſhe. "You are too indulgent to her wayward humours: ſo haughty a ſpirit muſt be conquered."

"IT may be ſubdued by kindneſs," replied Arabella; "but if harſh means are purſued, I would not anſwer for the conſequences."

"I differ widely from you in that point," anſwered this unfeeling mother; "and, till you can convince me that I am wrong, I muſt be permitted to proceed in my own way. Go, my good Miſs Marſhall, and inſiſt on her purſuing her ſtudies as uſual this evening: I am determined to get the better of her, painful as the ſlighteſt exertion is to me."

ARABELLA held the governeſs's arm, and was going to ſpeak; but Mrs. Dorville inſiſted on her neither oppoſing her departure then, or interfering between them in future.

MRS.

Mrs. Harley, during this altercation, had taken up a news-paper; but was too well pleaſed with, and intereſted in, their converſation, to ſuffer her to attend to a word in it. To leave Arabella as little time as poſſible to reflect on what had juſt paſt, ſhe reminded her that ſhe had promiſed to read Macbeth for her, which would be an *infinite* treat; and as they were likely to have the evening to themſelves, no time could be ſo proper for the purpoſe.

As Arabella did not think herſelf at liberty to go to the only place her inclinations would have led her to, the library, ſhe granted her requeſt; and, at every pauſe, Mrs. Harley did not fail to expreſs her admiration of the work, and the fair reciter of it. Of the firſt I need ſay nothing, praiſe would be ſuperfluous; but Arabella's voice was muſic itſelf; and when

when the works of the inimitable Shakeſpear were before her, ſhe felt a degree of enthuſiaſm which animated and raiſed her above herſelf; and the eye that ſaw, the ear that hear'd her, could ſcarce fail of imbibing a portion of it. But all her feeling, all her eloquence, was loſt upon Mrs. Harley, who was buſied in contemplations that more nearly concerned herſelf. She clearly ſaw that all her hopes might be blaſted by a ſingle interview between the ſiſters. She dreaded the effect of the melting tenderneſs of Arabella on the ſuſceptible boſom of Maria, and reſolved to deviſe ſome method to keep them from being together without her. She was a perfect miſtreſs of what is called *female artifice*; and as they were ſitting at ſupper, complained of a violent palpitation at her heart. All the company were alarmed, and drops, &c. adminiſtered, but, for ſome time, without effect. At length, however,

however, ſhe affected to become eaſier, and reſolved to go to bed. As ſhe was leaving the room, ſeeming to recollect herſelf, ſhe turned to Maria, and begged that ſhe would let her maid that night lie in her apartment, as her own was ſo reſtleſs a ſleeper that ſhe feared being diſturbed by her. Maria eagerly caught at ſo fair an opportunity of having an uninterrupted converſation with her, and begged ſhe might be permitted to ſhare her bed. After ſome oppoſition from Miſs Marſhall, which Mrs. Harley found means to over-rule, it was agreed to; and they went up ſtairs together; but not ſpeedily to bed: for Mrs. Harley, finding her companion exactly in the humour ſhe wiſhed, full of reſentment, impatient of controul, and ready to reſolve upon freeing herſelf at any rate, ſeized the moment when theſe paſſions were at the higheſt, exerted all her power to inflame them; and, at length, in an

evil

evil hour, did the unſuſpicious, the artleſs Maria, agree to leave Beechwood the following night. The grand point once gained, all difficulties were eaſily obviated, and every minute particular of the plan regularly arranged. I ſcarce need ſay that each paſſed a ſleepleſs night. It was the firſt Maria had ever known; but it was rendered leſs irkſome by the lively chat of Mrs. Harley, whoſe ſpirits were at a high pitch. She roſe early in the morning, and wrote a note to acquaint her brother of the reſolutions taken in his favour; and appointing him to be, with a chaiſe and four, at the neareſt gate of the Park preciſely at ten that night. She ſent this precious paper by her truſty Abigail, who was ordered to deliver it into his own hands. It was agreed that, in the courſe of the day, ſhe ſhould communicate the ſcheme to Maria's maid; and, by a handſome preſent, induce her to attend her miſtreſs:

miſtreſs; who declared herſelf abſolutely averſe to going without ſome female friend or attendant, and could hardly be prevailed upon to diſpenſe with Mrs. Harley's accompanying her.

Before they left their room, an anſwer from Berkley arrived. He was all *extacy*, all *gratitude*. It ſhould be the exquiſitely happy employment of his future life to ſhow his ſenſe of ſuch infinite condeſcenſion. He could not venture to the Park that day; the raptures he felt were too ſtrong for concealment: but, heaven be praiſed, this was the laſt day that it would be neceſſary. To-morrow, and every ſucceeding one, he would avow to all the world, how ardent, how ſincere was the devotion, of her ever grateful and moſt paſſionate adorer, &c. &c.

ALL was now ſettled; and they went down to the breakfaſt parlour, where the kind words, and gentle looks, of Arabella, were more than once near forcing a tear from the eyes of her ſiſter. But Mrs. Harley took care to engroſs a large part of their attention to herſelf; and before the tea things were removed, propoſed riding in ſuch preſſing terms to Miſs Dorville, that ſhe could not, in common politeneſs, refuſe to accompany her.

MISS Marſhall had now real reaſon to complain of her pupil: every note ſhe ſtruck on her harpſichord was diſcordant; and her hand ſhook ſo violently, that ſhe could ſcarce hold the pen or pencil. The governeſs was alarmed; and, with an appearance of much conſternation, begged to know if ſhe was ill, offering her hartſhorn. Her look and enquiry ſtruck Maria in ſo ludicrous a light, that ſhe burſt into

into a laugh; but recollecting herſelf, aſked her pardon; and told her ſhe had a violent head-ach, which her uncommonly pale looks confirming, ſhe was excuſed from all further employment for the day. Mrs. Dorville diſapproved of Miſs Marſhall's unuſual lenity, concluding her illneſs a mere pretence to excuſe idleneſs and ill humour, and behaved with the moſt unkind reſerve to her daughter during the whole day, which ſerved in no ſmall degree to ſtrengthen the raſh reſolution ſhe had taken.

In the evening Maria complained that her head grew ſtill worſe; and, as had been concerted with Mrs. Harley, juſt as ſupper came upon the table, ſhe reſolved to go to bed. Arabella was greatly alarmed; and begging Mrs. Harley and her mother to excuſe her, accompanied her ſiſter to her apartment. "May deareſt creature," ſaid

ſaid ſhe, as they entered the dreſſing room, "you are greatly agitated, and I fear very ill. It is in conſequence of yeſterday's uneaſineſs; and I am diſtreſſed, greatly diſtreſſed, yet know not what to do for your relief."

"NOTHING, nothing. Pray leave me. Why ſhould my unhappineſs be any interruption to your pleaſures?"

"AH, Maria, how coldly you ſpeak! Can I enjoy pleaſure while you are unhappy? No, my ſiſter, my friend," taking her unwilling hand, "lay open all your ſorrows; let me at leaſt ſhare, if I cannot alleviate them."

"No, no; I will trouble you no further; I am already too much indebted to your compaſſion."

"CEASE to wound my ſoul with ſuch chilling words. Are you not, next to our common parent, the deareſt thing on earth to me? Believe me my only, my darling ſiſter!" folding her affectionately to her boſom, "There is nothing that I would not do to eaſe and make you happy. Let me dry thoſe tears." Maria was greatly ſoftened. "We will try to think of ſome plan that will contribute to it; and I will ſtrain every nerve, try all my intereſt with my mother to enforce it."

"OH, it is too late, too late," cried the ſobbing Maria.

"WHAT do you mean? You alarm me greatly! Do you feel any thing more than a head-ach?"

THE anxious tenderneſs with which ſhe ſpoke this, reached the heart of Maria. She

She took her ſiſter's hand, and fondly kiſſing it, " Ah, my Arabella, why am I not able to emulate you! I am not ill: the pain is here; my heart, my mind—"

She would have ſaid more, perhaps have diſcovered all, if Mrs. Harley, who had been on the rack of apprehenſion ever ſince they left the parlour, had not entered the room. Arabella was diſpleaſed at her intruſion, and would have requeſted her to leave them: but Maria recollecting all the horrors ſhe muſt encounter if ſhe loſt the preſent opportunity of eſcaping, beholding Miſs Marſhall on one hand, and the convent on the other, ſummoned all her reſolution, and begged that ſhe would ſtay; complained that ſhe wanted reſt very much, and haſtily began to undreſs. Arabella enquired where the maid was; and was informed that ſhe had given her leave to go out, and ſtay till the following evening.

ing. "Then you muſt ſuffer me to take her place for to night. Do not refuſe me, my dear girl; for I ſhall be eaſier, and ſleep better, when near you, than I could if uncertain how you were."

"INDEED, you diſtreſs me by the requeſt," replied Maria. "I am ſo immoderately ſleepy, that I muſt beg of you to leave me; and if I do not get up ſo early as uſual, in the morning, be not ſurpriſed; and pray do not diſturb me."

"YOU need not fear that, I am ſure," cried Mrs. Harley; "for if you ſleep till noon, it will ſcarce make amends for the reſt you loſt laſt night."

ARABELLA ſaluted, and wiſhed her a good repoſe, in ſo affectionate a manner, that a tear from Maria's eye dropt on her hand, and a plenteous ſhower followed.

The

The inſtant ſhe was left alone, "Alas!" he cried, "what is it that I am going to do! Is it poſſible that Maria Dorville is this very night to leave her mother's houſe? to elope?—Can this be a reality? Sure it appears more like a painful dream, from which I am now ſtruggling to awake! Dear, *dear* Arabella! can I reſolve to leave thee for five long years?—Thou, who didſt condeſcend to be the play-fellow of my childhood, and oughteſt to have been the guide of my youth! and a far ſafer one wouldeſt have been, than her whom I have choſen; though thy advice might have been leſs agreeable to my wayward fancy.

She pauſed, and her tears flowed afreſh. "But is it not yet in my power to retreat?—No, no, it is not. I muſt tread the path I have marked out for myſelf, let the termination be what it may. That

ſuch

ſuch a ſcheme has been formed cannot now be concealed; it is known to too many to hope for a poſſibility of that; and ſuch a blot upon my character would be irrecoverable through life. Beſides, to what inſults, to what reproaches, and ill uſage, ſhould I be expoſed from her whom I abhor! Berkley is a man of honour, and adores me: how then can I forfeit my word to him? and ſurely my proſpects are not deſpicable in marrying him!"

She then ran over in her mind all the pleaſant pictures which Mrs. Harley had ſet before her, and all the flattering and agreeable things which the Major had poured into her attentive ear during their laſt interview. From theſe not unpleaſing contemplations, ſhe was rouſed by a clock ſtriking ten. She ſtarted up; and recollecting that her preſent dreſs would be improper to travel in, haſtily changed

it for a riding-habit, which her maid had placed ready for her to put on. She was now compleatly equipped; and gently opening the door of her room, looked out into the gallery.—All was ſilence.—She proceeded with trembling ſteps to the top of the ſtairs. As ſhe went down the parlour door opened, and ſhe heard her ſiſter's voice. How her heart palpitated! She could hear her ſay, "Be attentive, good Johnſon, to Maria's bell; but on no account go into her room till ſhe rings. I will ſee how ſhe is in the morning before we ſend for Dr. Green; but bid James hold himſelf in readineſs to go at a minute's warning, if ſhe ſhould not be better." The voice ceaſed. Johnſon ſhut the parlour door, and walked acroſs the hall. Maria was greatly affected; and holding by the rail of the ſtairs, went up ſeveral ſteps, without knowing that ſhe moved; when the door again opened, and

Miſs

Miſs Marſhall's voice grated upon her ear. "You need not fear my diſturbing her," cried ſhe: "though I plainly perceive her illneſs is mere pretence and ill-humour.—But where is Romeo?" as ſhe cloſed the door. "Dear little creature, Romé, Romé?" and away ſhe went to ſeek him in the houſe-keeper's room, where this little inſenſible animal would retreat, as it ſhould ſeem, to avoid the careſſes of his doating miſtreſs.

All Maria's ſpirit and courage returned in an inſtant. She ſtept lightly down the ſtairs; opened the hall door, where ſhe was joined by her maid; and was in a few minutes after met by the enraptured Major, on whoſe arm ſhe leaned till they reached the chaiſe. They ſtept in, and ſet out towards Gretna-Green as ſwiftly as four ſtout horſes were able to carry them.

CHAPTER XI.

BEGINS WITH SOMETHING NEW, AND GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONSTERNATION AND SURPRISE OCCASIONED BY THE INCIDENT WHICH CONCLUDED THE LAST.

WHILE poor Maria was, by her own conſent, made the unfortunate victim of ſelfiſh avarice, Arabella, little imagining that ſhe concealed a thought from her, was revolving the diſagreeable circumſtances of her ſituation in her mind, and trying to find out ſome expedient that would, at leaſt, divert her thoughts from their preſent melancholy train. The only indulgence ſhe thought there

there was a probability of obtaining for her was a change of place; from which, the inſtant it preſented itſelf to her imagination, ſhe hoped much. She determined, therefore, to propoſe their taking a journey: and ſoon after her return from Maria's room, placing a chair near her mother's, and gently taking her hand, ſhe raiſed it to her lips, her eyes expreſſing a tender earneſtneſs; "I have been thinking," ſaid this affectionate ſiſter, "with great concern, on the very precarious ſtate of Maria's health and ſpirits. You know too well how ſevere a misfortune it is to be deprived of thoſe prime bleſſings of life, and would doubtleſs be more than anxious to ſecure them to one ſo very dear to you."

"WHAT is it you mean to propoſe?" anſwered Mrs. Dorville. "You know how diſagreeable it is to me to refuſe you

any thing; but I cannot think of altering my plan with reſpect to her."

"You ſeem ſo determined on that point, my dear Madam, that I will not, at preſent, venture to expreſs the difference of my opinion; but I am convinced matters cannot go on long as they now do, without riſking the worſt conſequences both to her conſtitution and diſpoſition. Continual fretting and uneaſineſs muſt be highly prejudicial to both. You know Dr. Green warmly recommended a few months reſidence at Briſtol to Maria laſt year. Suppoſe we were to ſpend the remainder of this ſummer at the hot wells, and the autumn at Bath? Change of ſcene would be a great relief to her ſpirits; and I really think the air and waters of Briſtol would be of much ſervice to her health. My whole heart is ſet upon this ſcheme, and your compliance will inexpreſſibly oblige me."

"You

"You know, my dear, how disagreeable travelling is to me; but, in consideration of your very earnest request, perhaps I might indulge you in this journey, did not an insuperable obstacle occur. I have had a letter from my brother, in which he informs me that he intends being here in a few days."

"That may delay, but not frustrate, our plan," replied Arabella. "My uncle dislikes Wales extremely, and I have no doubt will accompany us with pleasure."

"Very probably he might; but he brings with him a gentleman, to whom it would be highly improper to propose it; a brother of the Duke of Dunbeath's; and while he honours us with his company, I beg it may not be even mentioned."

"THEN I ſhall pray that his viſit may be ſhort; for our dear girl's caſe will not bear trifling with."

"YOUR fears exaggerate her danger. I think, with Miſs Marſhall, that her preſent indiſpoſition proceeds chiefly from ill temper and fretfulneſs. But pray, my love, baniſh a gloom which I am not accuſtomed to ſee on your countenance, and let it be embelliſhed with your ſweeteſt ſmiles, when you meet our expected gueſts. Perhaps I ſhould have no objection to your making a conqueſt of Lord Charles Blair: his rank, and the character my brother gives of him, ſpeak him an object worthy your ambition."

"I ſhall receive him with pleaſure as my uncle's friend; but my ambition, I am well convinced, will never lead me a ſtep further; and I hope he is not introduced

troduced here with any particular intentions."

"AND if he were, I hope you would not reſolve to diſlike a gentleman before you ſaw him. Perverſeneſs is not natural to you, or I ſhould ſay you were reſolved in every thing to oppoſe my wiſhes."

"AND is there really any thing ſerious thought of?" cried Arabella, turning as pale as aſhes. The widow burſt into an affected laugh; but Mrs. Dorville was diſpleaſed. "As the ſubject ſeems ſo very unpleaſant," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall drop it for the preſent; but I hope you will give me no reaſon to-morrow to accuſe you of folly and caprice, if I ſhould tell you that ſomething ſerious may poſſibly be intended." So ſaying ſhe wiſhed them good repoſe, and withdrew for the night."

ARABELLA continued in a muſing poſture, her eyes fixed upon the ground, till Mrs. Harley cried, with a malicious archneſs, "What, are you meditating, with all that ſolemnity, on the horrors of a ducal coronet? Do you already feel the weight of ſuch oppreſſive dignity?"

"I DO not even apprehend," replied Arabella, ſmiling, "that I am threatened with ſo heavy a burden, therefore it is not probable that my meditations are clouded by it."

"WELL, I hope you will endeavour to be reſigned; for it will undoubtedly be your fate to be a dutcheſs. The Duke of Dunbeath, though he has been married many years, has no other heir than Lord Charles, who is to be your moſt devoted. Now, my dear Miſs Dorville, do promiſe to take me in your train when you go to his

his ancient caſtle in Scotland. Lord, you will be quite a little queen when you viſit the iſland which belongs entirely to him; that is to his brother, and conſequently to him in reverſion. You, that are ſo fond of converſing with, and benefitting, the lower claſs of people, will there have an ample field for your benevolence. Why, the place will become a little Utopia under your forming hand; and its inhabitants, modelled by their benefactreſs, will again revive the manners of the golden age. New Oſſians ſhall ariſe to celebrate you; and, but that Lord Charles will with difficulty find an enemy, he ſhould be a ſecond Fingal."

ARABELLA, again ſmiling, aſſured Mrs. Harley that ſhe had over-rated her talents, and, ſhe flattered herſelf, the ſphere they were deſtined to act in.

Mrs. Harley was extremely impatient for the uſual hour of retiring; and the moment the clock ſtruck eleven, wiſhed Miſs Dorville and the governeſs a good night, and haſtened up ſtairs, hoping to convince herſelf of the certainty of her brother's good fortune. She ſtole ſoftly to the door of Maria's apartment, and ſeeing it open, though they had agreed that it would be neceſſary to faſten it, to prevent the poſſibility of a premature diſcovery, her heart miſgave her; and ſhe entered the room with no ſmall degree of apprehenſion, fearing her young friend's reſolution had failed her in the hour of trial: but finding all ſilent, and the apartment empty, as ſhe wiſhed, pleaſure fluſhed on her cheek; and, after cautiouſly locking the door, ſhe haſtened to her own, elated with an extravagant degree of joy. I have, at leaſt, amply provided for my brother, thought ſhe; and, till I am equally

fortunate

fortunate for myſelf, he muſt ſupport me, and liberally too. The certainty of coming into poſſeſſion of ſuch a fortune as Maria's, will enable him to raiſe what money he pleaſes; and if I draw upon him oftner than he wiſhes, he muſt make his wife an oeconomiſt, and leſſen her expences, that he may, with more eaſe, ſupport mine. He muſt be an ungrateful wretch indeed, if he ſcruples to give me a ſhare of what I have beſtowed upon him.

Reflections of this agreeable kind kept her awake moſt part of the night; and, as morning approached, ſhe enjoyed, in idea, the conſternation which the family would be in when Maria's flight was diſcovered. She was the firſt who appeared in the breakfaſt parlour, and, ſcarce able to conceal her inward ſatisfaction, met Arabella with a countenance full of ſmiles,

which

which ſhe had ſome difficulty to diſmiſs, while ſhe enquired how Miſs Maria had reſted. Arabella could give her no information on that head, but ſaid ſhe would go to her ſiſter's apartment the moment breakfaſt was over. Miſs Marſhall drew herſelf up, and ſaid ſhe could not imagine what Miſs Maria meant by locking her door; but added, "ſhe will find it difficult to impoſe upon me by pretended illneſs; for, without ſhe thinks proper to carry on the farce ſo far as to keep her room, I ſhall inſiſt on her attending in the library as uſual: her whims ſhall neither bring diſgrace on herſelf or me, if I can help it."

"TAKE care, Miſs Marſhall," replied Arabella, "that you do not manifeſt a deſire to mortify, and render her unhappy, under a pretence of attending to her improvement; your late conduct has given

given me too much reaſon to ſuſpect ſuch a motive."

"THIS is ſtrange language," anſwered ſhe, colouring, "from one who the other day was herſelf my pupil, from the *amiable* Miſs Dorville, who is admired, praiſed, held up as a pattern of docility."

"I muſt be the moſt hard and inſenſible of human beings," cried Arabella, "if I could behold, unmoved, my dear, my only ſiſter, made the victim of caprice and ill-nature; and you may depend upon it, if I have any intereſt, any influence, ſhe ſhall be made eaſy."

THE governeſs did not think proper to reply. Indeed, ſhe had been ſo fully occupied in feeding and careſſing her dear Romeo, that ſhe hardly ſeemed ſenſible that any one was ſpeaking. Arabella aroſe

aroſe ſoon after, and begging Mrs. Harley's excuſe, left the room. Her ſteps were haſtily directed towards her ſiſter's chamber, the door of which, from Miſs Marſhall's information, ſhe was not ſurprized to find locked. She, at firſt, knocked gently; but receiving no anſwer, concluded that ſhe was aſleep; and, unwilling to diſturb her, went into her own room, and taking up a book, tried to compoſe her mind. But Maria was ſtill uppermoſt in her thoughts. She laid it down, walked a few turns acroſs the room; and her watch informing her that it was near ten o'clock, ſhe determined at once to eaſe or juſtify her apprehenſions; and thinking her ſiſter might fear to admit her angry governeſs, after rapping at the door, ſhe cried, "Maria, Maria, are you awake, my love?" She called again, in a louder tone, but no anſwer was given. She tried to ſpeak once more, but could not

not articulate a word: a univerſal tremor ſeized her, and it was with difficulty that ſhe moved from the ſpot: but her preſence of mind never entirely forſaking her, ſhe, at length, reached the dreſſing room bell, which ſhe rang with ſome violence, and ſinking on a ſopha, a flood of tears gave her a ſeaſonable relief. "Oh," cried ſhe, "Maria is unable to anſwer me—Heaven only knows in what a ſtate I ſhall find her! Perhaps ſtretched lifeleſs on the bed, where I vainly hoped ſhe was enjoying ſweet repoſe."—Her eyes were lifted up, her hands claſped, when Johnſon entered the room. "Let that door be opened inſtantly," cried ſhe, eagerly: "I fear Maria is very very ill".

Her orders were immediately executed; and ſhe was the firſt who entered; but what was her aſtoniſhment, when ſhe, with trembling hand, drew aſide the curtains,

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to behold no Maria, to ſee that ſhe had not even been in bed!—She looked round the room; ſhe almoſt doubted whether her ſenſes did not deceive her, whether ſhe was awake! It would, perhaps, have been long before ſhe had entirely recovered her recollection, if Mrs. Hariey and Miſs Marſhall had not entered. "Well," exclaimed the firſt, as ſhe came in, "how does Miſs Maria? Why, my dear, your looks abſolutely frighten me. Where is ſhe? Not ill, I hope!"

"I AM unable to anſwer your queſtions," replied Arabella, ſinking down on a chair near the bed. Indeed, ſhe was not able to ſtand. The circumſtances of her not having been in bed, locking her door, and her behaviour the preceding evening, convinced her that Maria's abſence was not accidental; and apprehenſions the moſt painful took poſſeſſion of her

her mind. "Good heavens?" reſumed the widow, with every token of aſtoniſhment, "what can be the matter! where can your ſiſter be?"

"I SHOULD imagine," ſaid Miſs Marſhall, with a malicious ſmile, "that the young lady had made an elopement, but that I am at a loſs to gueſs who ſhe could chuſe as the partner of her flight. But ſuppoſe we ſend ſome of the ſervants into the Park and gardens? ſhe was, perhaps, too much out of humour to go to bed laſt night, and may be now enjoying the fright ſhe may well ſuppoſe we are in. I have known girls of her age do things as ridiculous as this."

ARABELLA looked incredulouſly, but did not oppoſe the orders, which ſhe gave Mrs. Johnſon for an immediate ſearch. No one was more amazed, more grieved, than

than Mrs. Harley: but the buſtle ſhe made did not diſturb Arabella; ſhe ſat half ſtupefied, till Mrs. Johnſon returned with the intelligence that Miſs Maria was not to be found; and that one of the workmen had ſeen a chaiſe and four, with a gentleman in it, ſtop at the neareſt of the Park gates, between nine and ten the preceding night. "Then all is, indeed, over," ſaid Arabella, riſing. "Impetuous, unfortunate girl! how dreadfully has thy impatient temper miſled thee!" Then after a ſhort pauſe,—"I hope my mother has not been informed of her abſence?"

JOHNSON informed her that ſhe had cautioned her woman againſt alarming her lady till they had her orders how to proceed. "That was well thought of: it is from me that ſhe muſt hear the diſtreſſing intelligence."

"SUFFER

"SUFFER me," ſaid Mrs. Harley, taking her hand, "to relieve you from ſo melancholy a taſk. You look pale, and tremble exceſſively: pray take ſome hartſhorn and water, and lie down."

No," replied Arabella, "while the mind is ſo ill at eaſe, the body cannot hope to reſt. I ſhall be better when I have diſcharged the painful duty which firſt demands my attention: if I can ſee my mother tolerably eaſy, I ſhall be more ſo myſelf."

SHE then ſwallowed ſome drops, which Johnſon had prepared for her, and went immediately to Mrs. Dorville's apartment, where, in the gentleſt and moſt cautious manner, ſhe diſcloſed the unwelcome tidings. Mrs. Dorville was greatly agitated; but her emotions were very different from thoſe of her daughter. While

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the tear of compaſſion ſtood in the eye of the latter, the former glowed with anger: but, before her feelings were ſufficiently calm to give her power to expreſs them, a letter was brought her, which ſhe bid Arabella open. She obeyed, and, with increaſed aſtoniſhment, read the following words:

"Madam,

"My extreme unwillingneſs to give you or your amiable daughter a moment's unneceſſary pain, induces me to take up my pen even in this hour of reſtleſs doubt and anxiety; and I ſhall leave orders that this letter ſhall be delivered ſo early in the morning, that it will, I hope, prevent all needleſs fears on account of her, who, in a ſhort time after you receive this, will, I flatter myſelf, be mine by every law, human and divine. I have long had the moſt ſincere and paſſionate regard for the

lovely Maria, and I truſt ſhe will never have reaſon to repent the confidence ſhe now places in me, which it ſhall be the happy employment of my future life to deſerve. If, to her affection, I am permitted to add your forgiveneſs, and the friendſhip of Miſs Dorville, I ſhall eſteem myſelf the moſt fortunate of men.

I am, Madam,
with the greateſt reſpect,
your very humble ſervant,
Friday night. WILLIAM BERKLEY."

ARABELLA was rather conſoled than diſpleaſed by reading this letter, and endeavoured to repreſent the affair in the moſt favourable light to her mother. "Conſider, deareſt Madam," ſaid ſhe, "how much worſe it might have been. Mr. Berkley is a man of ſenſe, a man of family, and was the friend and favourite of my ever honoured father. She has neither diſgraced herſelf or us."

"WHAT!"

"WHAT!" replied Mrs. Dorville, "do you call a young lady's leaving her mother's houſe in the night, and truſting herſelf to the mercy of an unprincipled rake, no diſgrace! I thought your notions of female honour had been more delicate."

"DEAR Madam, you miſtake me. I do not attempt to vindicate Maria's conduct: nothing but her extreme youth, and the natural violence of her temper, can, in any degree, excuſe her fault; but I rejoice that ſhe is not in worſe hands."

"IT is well if you can find occaſion for joy in ſo ſhameful, ſo monſtrous an affair: but I am determined never to ſee, or have any further connection with her."

ARABELLA was ſhocked at this declaration; but forbore to anſwer it, convinced that

that oppoſition would rather irritate than ſoften her mother in the diſpoſition ſhe then ſaw her, and ſat ſilent and penſive, a tear ſometimes ſtealing from her eye, till the ſudden entrance of Miſs Marſhall, and her affected condolence, put an end to her reverie. "I am miſerable, dear Madam," cried ſhe, "to ſee you endure ſo much, and would give the world to have our dreadful uncertainty removed."

"THAT is already done," replied Mrs. Dorville. "Read this letter, and your doubts will be at an end."

THE governeſs turned pale the moment ſhe caſt her eye over the paper; for the hand writing was well known to her: but who can deſcribe her emotions as ſhe read? You muſt have beheld her countenance to enable you to form an idea of them! "Heaven and earth!" cried ſhe, ſtarting

up, "is it poſſible? Is it in man to be ſo deceitful? Gone off with Berkley! with one who, I may almoſt ſay, was the *huſband* of another! But may it not yet be prevented? Suffer me to ſend the ſervants after them. Nay, I will go myſelf: I will order the chaiſe." She was haſtily quitting the room; but Arabella catching hold of her arm, "What are you about to do?" ſaid ſhe. "It is now impoſſible to overtake them; and an attempt ſo abſurd would only expoſe you to ridicule, and give him an additional triumph."

"It is not you, Madam, who are to decide upon this queſtion," replied the half frantic governeſs. "I appeal to Mrs. Dorville whether it is not my duty to try every thing poſſible to recover her daughter? Dear, dear Madam," trembling with eagerneſs, "ſuffer me to order the chaiſe!"

"No,

"No, no," cried Mrs. Dorville, peeviſhly, "you need not expoſe yourſelf to keep Maria in countenance: and if it were even in your power to bring her back, this houſe ſhould never receive her."

"But my regard for her is ſo great," eagerly replied Miſs Marſhall, "that if I could prevent this ſhocking marriage, I would go abroad with her for a few years till the matter was forgotten—Only let me order the carriage."

"I entirely diſapprove all your propoſals," anſwered Mrs. Dorville, "and at this time will not be teazed."

The poor governeſs bit her lips, took up the letter, tore it into a hundred pieces, hardly knowing what ſhe did, and, crimſoned over with paſſion, left the room. Mrs. Dorville continued violently enraged

againſt Maria, and out of humour with Arabella for attempting to palliate her fault. She would not be prevailed upon to leave her apartment the whole day; and it was not without ſome difficulty, that her daughter obtained permiſſion to attend her there. Mrs. Harley and Miſs Marſhall were no better company below ſtairs. The former, indeed, ardently longed to quit the houſe; but wiſhing to perſuade the world that ſhe was entirely ignorant of her brother's ſcheme, ſhe determined to ſtay a ſhort time longer there, if ſhe was civilly treated; which ſhe was conſcious was more than ſhe had a right to expect. She took great pains to perſuade Miſs Marſhall that ſhe was greatly diſtreſſed at what had happened; but ſhe was not heard by that lady with her uſual degree of partiality, and could get nothing but reproaches, or, at beſt, a ſilent hearing, from her. Even Romeo, on this unfortunate

fortunate day, ceaſed to be a favourite: and, O dire reverſe of his former happineſs! if he attempted to jump on his miſtreſs's lap, or play with the ribbon of her faſh, as in better times he was wont to do, he was rudely puſhed away by the hand that uſed to pat and feed him, and, inſtead of "come hither, ſweet fellow," and "charming Romé," it was, "Off, hideous animal! hence, tormenting wretch!"

CHAPTER XII.

SHORTER THAN THE LAST, AND, AS IT CONTAINS NOTHING PARTICULARLY INTERESTING, MAY BE PASSED OVER, UNLESS THE READER CHOOSES TO PERUSE IT.

MEANTIME rumour had not been ſilent on the ſubject of Maria's flight. It was ſoon proclaimed in the ſteward's room at Llangorwel, from whence it ſtole, in a few minutes, to the drawing room, where Lady Anne, and her three eldeſt daughters, were ſitting at tea; Mr. Courteney, Sir George, and ſeveral other gentlemen, having been out the whole day on a fiſhing party, which the

the extreme heat, and ſome violent claps of thunder in the morning, had prevented the ladies from joining. "Lord! my Lady," cried Mrs. Jackſon, Lady Anne's woman, as ſhe entered, "I have heard ſuch a piece of news! Your Ladyſhip will be ſo ſurprized; and yet it is ſure to be true, for Mr. John had it from the head workman at the Park."

"NEVER trouble me with thine authorities, good girl," interrupted her lady, "but tell me what is the wonderful intelligence thou haſt heard?"

"INDEED, your Ladyſhip will hardly believe it. I am ſure I have been all of a flutter ever ſince Mr. John mentioned it; and yet its no ſecret neither; the whole country knows it by this time."

"THAT is more than we ſhall ever do at this rate," cried Lady Anne. "Prithee come to the point at once, and tell us what is thy news."

"WHY, to be ſure, my Lady, that was the very reaſon of my coming in; for the very moment I heard ſpeak of it, I ſaid to Mr. John—"

"THIS is too much.—Dear mother, let John be ſent for," cried Miſs Courteney: "for we ſhall never hear what has happened from this ſilly creature."

"GOOD Jackſon," ſaid Lady Anne, laughing, "has any thing befallen the family at Beechwood?"

"THAT there has, indeed, and a very ſtrange thing too; what neither your Ladyſhip or Miſs Courteney would ever have

have expected. It is not five minutes ſince I heard it; for I hardly let Mr. John finiſh his ſtory before I ran to tell your Ladyſhip; for I knew your Ladyſhip and Miſs Courteney would be pleaſed to hear it; though to be ſure you would be ſorry to think that ſo fine a young lady, and ſo great a fortune, ſhould throw herſelf away—"

"TELL me," cried Julia, catching hold of the poor Abigail's arm with an eagerneſs that almoſt frightened her, "is Miſs Dorville married? Is ſhe gone off?"

"No, Ma'am, no," endeavouring to diſengage herſelf: "it is Miſs Maria, who jumped through her dreſſing room window at twelve o'clock laſt night—It was the greateſt mercy that ſhe did not break her neck—I have known accidents—"

"DOST thou know who ſhe went off with?" ſaid Miſs Courteney.

"YES, Ma'am; nobody is a ſtranger to that; and it's thought very odd that ſhe ſhould like a man old enough to be her father—To be ſure, as I told Mr. John, if it had been ſuch a gentleman as Sir George—"

"I'LL be hanged if it is not Berkley," cried Lady Anne.

"WELL, I proteſt your Ladyſhip has the beſt gueſs in the world."

"AND ſo Maria Dorville is actually gone to Scotland with the Major; it is what I ſhould never have expected—But didſt thou hear any other particulars?"

"AYE,"

"AYE," cries Julia, "did John hear what mamma, and governeſs, and ſiſter Prudence ſay to it?"

"WHY, Ma'am, they ſay Mrs. Dorville has taken to her bed upon it; and Miſs Bella is never out of her room: and as for Miſs Marſhall, ſhe is half crazy; for ſhe and Squire Berkley have kept company together for many years; and ſome ſay ſhe can ſhow a promiſe of marriage under his own hand—"

"WELL, I vow this delightful," interrupted Miſs Courteney.—"Dear Jackſon, did you pick up any thing elſe about them?"

"NOTHING, Ma'am, but that they ſet out in the very dead of the night in a chariot and ſix, with a number of ſervants all armed. Miſs Marſhall would have gone

after them before it was light, but Miſs Dorville would not let her, which makes ſome people ſuſpect that ſhe knew of the ſcheme; and, indeed, as I told Mr. John—"

"ENOUGH, enough," ſaid Lady Anne. "I believe we have heard all that thou canſt inform us of, and we will excuſe thy comments.—Bid John, however, enquire all the particulars of this ſtrange affair; for I am very much concerned for the family. Stay, Jackſon; take the children with you: Miſs Courteney and I wiſh to be *tété-a-tété*."

"NAY, mamma, do let my ſtay," ſaid Victoria, who was in her fourteenth year. "I know you are going to talk about the Dorvilles, and I am as much diverted about Maria's running away as Julia can be."

"FIE,

"FIE, child," replied Lady Anne, laughing; "if you talk at ſuch a rate, I ſhall expect your elopement to be the next—Go, go; your are in our way."

"WELL, you are exceſſively ill natured," cried Victoria, as ſhe quitted the room: "but I hope I am not to be treated like a child as long as I live, any more than my ſiſter."

No ſooner were Lady Anne and her daughter left alone, than they began to comment, with no ſmall degree of pleaſure, upon the mortification which they ſuppoſed Maria's flight would occaſion to her mother and ſiſter: but when they reflected upon its probable conſequences on their own favourite ſcheme of detaching Sir George from Miſs Dorville, it appeared in a much leſs pleaſant light. The marriage of Berkley removed the principal

pal bar that ſeemed to ſtand between them; and unleſs ſome other could be formed, all hope of keeping them aſunder would be at an end. They had, indeed, ſaid and done every thing in their power to miſrepreſent her words and actions to him, and, they flattered themſelves, with ſome effect: they had, at leaſt, rendered him ſuſpicious of her, doubtful whether ſhe poſſeſſed *all* thoſe charming qualities of the heart which were ſo indiſpenſable in the woman of his choice. But he was a man of too much penetration, too much accuſtomed to ſee with his own eyes, to render it at all probable that they could ſo entirely miſlead, as to induce him to give up all thoughts of her, without ſome maſter ſtroke of invention, ſomething that ſhould entirely ruin her in his opinion. But though they racked their inventions, conſidered and reconſidered, no plan for this purpoſe, that appeared at all

all likely to ſucced, occurred to either of them. At length it was reſolved to call in an auxiliary to aſſiſt in this difficult buſineſs. Mrs. Harley's talents for intrigue were well known to them; and her diſlike to, and envy of, Miſs Dorville, rendered it probable that ſhe would have no objection to an opportunity of exerciſing them to her mortification. They alſo concluded, that, as matters now ſtood, Beechwood could no longer afford her an agreeable place of reſidence, and ſhe would be glad to ſpend a few weeks with them; their manner of living being, indeed, at all times much better ſuited to her taſte, than the regular ſameneſs of the family ſhe now reſided with. Lady Anne, and her daughter, felicitated themſelves much upon this ſcheme; and a very polite note was written, inviting Mrs. Harley to Llangorwel, in the moſt friendly terms, and ſent to the Park, together with one enquiring after

after the health of the family there. Mrs. Harley did not fail to return a moſt obliging anſwer, promiſing to be with them in the courſe of the next three days; for ſhe wiſhed, if poſſible, to ſtay at Beechwood till ſhe ſaw the effect of a ſupplicatory letter from her brother and new ſiſter, which ſhe expected to arrive within that time.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

NEARLY AS SHORT AS THE LAST, BUT CONTAINS A VERY INTERESTING INCIDENT.

MRS. Dorville aroſe the next morning, if poſſible, more than ever enraged at her youngeſt daughter. When ſhe reflected upon the folly and imprudence ſhe had been guilty of, and how much better ſhe might rationally have expected to have connected herſelf, ſhe was filled with indignation. Perhaps the conſciouſneſs that ſhe had herſelf contributed much to render her home uncomfortable, and, in ſome meaſure, juſtified her in ſeeking another, which ought to have

have made her more lenient and favourable, augmented her anger: for ſhe was one of thoſe people who determine never to own themſelves in the wrong; and if a degree of internal conviction, that they have been ſo, forces itſelf upon their minds, they are rather provoked than humbled by it. In this diſpoſition did Arabella find her, when ſhe attended as uſual in her dreſſing room; and, notwithſtanding all her efforts to conſole and amuſe her, they were in no very comfortable ſituation, when a letter, brought expreſs by one of Major Berkley's ſervants, was delivered. Mrs. Dorville immediately ordered that it ſhould be returned to the bearer unopened; but being informed that it was directed to her daughter, ſhe ſuffered her to break the ſeal without oppoſition. The contents were as follows:—

" Madam,

" Madam,

" GREATLY, as you have probably been ſurprized and hurt by the unexpected flight of your ſiſter, you have ſuffered nothing in compariſon of what I experience at this inſtant! I am the moſt unhappy of men, and (for I know the ſenſibility of your mind) you will ſoon be a partaker of my miſery; but that is far from being a conſolation to me. I would, if poſſible, arm and prepare you for the intelligence I am about to communicate: but, perhaps, it will appear leſs alarming, leſs ſhocking to you than to me, whoſe every hope of future felicity it has cruſhed, when I thought them on the very eve of accompliſhment. I will not attempt entirely to juſtify myſelf in perſuading the lovely Maria to throw herſelf into my arms, to a lady of your extreme delicacy, and very exact notions of decorum; I will only ſay, that if happineſs is, in reality, " Our being's

being's end and aim," I could not ſurely be wrong in purſuing it by the only way left me; for I well knew my fortune, nay, perhaps, even my rank in life, fell far ſhort of what Mrs. Dorville would expect for her daughter, and, of courſe, an application to her muſt defeat all my hopes. But you, dear Madam, are on the rack of ſuſpence: I will haſten to the point. Your ſiſter condeſcended to meet me laſt night according to appointment, and I thought myſelf the happieſt of men. We travelled ſeveral ſtages with the greateſt expedition, waiting only for a change of horſes at each, which I had ſent before to order, that we might not be delayed for an unneceſſary minute. A little before four this morning we reached Abergavenny, and I perſuaded my fair companion to alight, and take ſome refreſhment, as ſhe appeared a good deal fatigued. After ſhe had drank ſome chocolate, I

hoped

hoped ſhe would have been able to proceed on her journey; but ſhe told me ſhe found herſelf ſo indifferent, that ſhe would lie down for a few hours, and deſired I would not diſturb her. I acquieſced, though, I own, with reluctance; and ſhe retired with her maid. I waited in a miſerable ſtate of anxiety and impatience till eight o'clock, and then ventured to ſend the chamber maid to enquire how ſhe did.—But, what was my aſtoniſhment!—Ah, Madam, gueſs what were my feelings, when I was informed that neither ſhe or her ſervant could be found. As ſoon as I could ſufficiently recollect myſelf, I ſent to every inn in the place, to every houſe where a carriage or a horſe could be hired, but could gain no tidings. I diſpatched people on every different road that led from it; but have not been able to gain the ſmalleſt intelligence, though I offered liberal rewards to any who could only aſ-

ſure

ſure me that they had ſeen her. Where the dear creature can be, or what was the reaſon of her flight, is equally unknown to me. You will probably be ſoon informed of both from herſelf. Exquiſitely painful as my diſappointment is, dreadful as my ſufferings have been during this day, I feel that my affections are too firmly fixed on her, who has long been their only object, to let me think of giving her up while a ſhadow of hope remains; and to a lady of your delicacy I refer the queſtion, whether ſhe can now, with honour, give her hand to another. To your well known candour, deareſt Madam, I appeal, truſting that you will repreſent this matter in the moſt favourable, which I will venture to ſay is the juſteſt, light to Mrs. Dorville, which will be conferring the greateſt obligation on him who is, with the moſt profound reſpect, your obedient ſervant,

WILLIAM BERKLEY."

THE

THE mind of Arabella was ſtrongly agitated as ſhe peruſed this letter; and ſuch a variety of emotions ſucceeded each other on her expreſſive countenance, that her mother could not avoid obſerving them; and expreſſing her ſurprize that a letter, which ſhe ſuppoſed contained nothing more than was uſual on ſimilar occaſions, could cauſe them. Arabella, after a ſilence of a few minutes, aroſe, and taking her mother's hand, "Ah, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "ſuffer me to plead, and let me not plead in vain, for your dear, your repenting Maria, who has ſeen her fault, and will ſoon throw herſelf at your feet to implore forgiveneſs! O that you would receive her kindly; her youth—"

"WHAT is that you ſay?" interrupted Mrs. Dorville. "Is ſhe not on her way to Scotland,—going to put herſelf under other protection?"

"No,"

"No," replied Arabella. "She doubtleſs ſaw her raſhneſs in its true light, and, too generous to perſiſt becauſe ſhe had gone a few ſteps in the crooked path of error, left the man who had enticed her into it."

"PRAY drop your metaphors, Miſs Dorville, and inform me of as much of the contents of that paper, as it is neceſſary for me to know."

"You muſt ſuffer me to read the whole, dear Madam; and let me intreat you to form no raſh reſolutions againſt one who has already been ſeverely puniſhed for this her firſt fault."

ARABELLA then read the letter; and when ſhe had finiſhed, again tried all her powers of perſuaſion in favour of the unhappy culprit, but with little proſpect of ſucceſs,

ſucceſs, Mrs. Dorville declaring her ſecond *elopement* as ridiculous as the firſt was criminal. During this altercation Miſs Marſhall entered the room; and Mrs. Dorville, feeling herſelf more diſpoſed to be flattered and humoured, than reaſoned with, begged Arabella would take a walk or an airing, for ſhe already perceived an alteration in her looks, which was doubtleſs occaſioned by the confinement ſhe had impoſed upon herſelf. "No remonſtrances, my dear," concluded ſhe. "You muſt now be doubly careful of yourſelf, for henceforward you are my *only* child."

THE governeſs was tranſported with joy when the contents of the letter were communicated to her; ſhe could with difficulty conceal the exceſs of her raptures: from the loweſt depth of deſpair, it raiſed her to the higheſt pinnacle of hope. The

reader may poſſibly think ſhe had little to raiſe the latter charming ſenſation, but her paſſion enabled her

" To hope though hope were loſt,
" Though heaven and earth her wiſhes croſs'd."

And now that ſhe was aſſured all preſent danger was over, ſhe thought a thouſand things might happen in her favour. Her influence over Mrs. Dorville would almoſt enſure his future ſeparation from Maria; and how probable was it that *ſhe*, who would ſo kindly receive, ſo freely forgive, and ſo ſweetly ſooth his mind, ruffled by diſappointments, ſhould at length become neceſſary to his comfort, and, of courſe, exquiſitely happy in the end, by becoming his wife. Thus did vanity, ſelf love, and a ſanguine temper, unite to flatter, and render her, in idea, compleatly bleſſed; while the diſmal reverſe clouded the generally gay ſpirits of Mrs. Harley. She alſo

alſo had received a letter from the Major, containing the ſame melancholy account, but written in terms widely different from thoſe in which he thought proper to addreſs Miſs Dorville. Indeed, he did not ſpare to execrate "the little jilt who had ſerved him ſo curſed a trick," which he ſwore to make her repent of if ever he ſhould be ſo lucky as to have it in his power; but of that he feared there was little proſpect, unleſs her inventive wit, which had, in this inſtance, been ſo miſerably circumvented, could help him out. He added, "if neceſſity was the parent of invention, he had a right to all her aſſiſtance; for he had almoſt expended his laſt guinea; and, as their project had failed, he was at a loſs where, or on what terms, to borrow more."

If thou haſt any compaſſion, my gentle reader, to beſtow upon an unworthy ob-

ject, (and ſurely the undeſerving are the moſt *truly* miſerable,) give it to the unfortunate peruſer of this unwelcome letter, who was awakened by its contents, from a delicious golden dream, to contempt and poverty. Her ſituation was, indeed, deplorable: all hope of aſſiſtance from her brother was, for the preſent, cut off; and, grievous to relate, ſhe had been obliged to borrow ten guineas from Miſs Dorville to make out thirty, which was the ſum demanded by Miſs Maria's maid before ſhe would conſent to accompany her lady, or even keep the ſecret which had, of neceſſity, been entruſted to her. She was deſtitute of money even to ſtake at cards with. How then could ſhe go to Llangorwel? Yet go ſhe muſt; it was her only reſource, the family at Beechwood looked upon her with ſuch a chilling coldneſs. Indeed, ſhe had never been admitted into Mrs. Dorville's preſence ſince her daughter's departure,

parture, though ſhe had more than once requeſted it; and her pretended ignorance of her brother's deſigns ſeemed to gain little credit with Arabella. She determined, therefore, notwithſtanding the diſmal ſituation of her finances, to ſhow Lady Anne Courteney's note of invitation, and leave the Park before ſhe was in plain terms deſired ſo to do. Mrs. Dorville declined ſeeing her before ſhe went, on the ſcore of indiſpoſition; but Arabella bid her a civil adieu, and ordered the chaiſe to convey her to Llangorwel. When ſhe approached Miſs Marſhall, ſhe perceived a wonderful change in the behaviour of that lady: ſhe lamented her reſolution of leaving them in the moſt pathetic terms; ſaid they ſhould ſoon be loſt and undone without her; and hoped ſhe would ſoon favour them with another viſit. To all this, had Mrs. Harley been guided by her feelings, ſhe would have

returned the anſwer of contempt ſo mean a flatterer deſerved; but thinking it at leaſt poſſible that ſhe might have further occaſion for her aſſiſtance, ſhe preſſed her hand, aſſured her of her continual friendſhip, and, in a whiſper, mentioned ſomething of the revived poſſibility of their being more nearly connected hereafter. This hint brought abundance of colour into the cheeks of the governeſs, and added warmth to the kind adieu which ſhe was obliged unwillingly to pronounce.

All the two following days did Arabella impatiently expect to ſee or hear from her ſiſter; every time a door opened ſhe ſtarted; hope and diſappointment alternately ſucceeded each other; and peace was baniſhed from that gentle boſom, which was wont to be its happy manſion. The Courteneys, accompanied by Sir George Brudenell, and Mr. Lewis and his ſiſter,

ſiſter, called, but were not admitted; Mrs. Dorville ſtill keeping her room, though rather from vexation than illneſs; and her daughter, fatigued with endeavours to ſoften her temper, and moderate her reſentment, (endeavours attended with ſo little ſucceſs,) and weighed down with a load of grief and anxiety, felt herſelf unable to receive them.

CHAPTR XIV.

ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF TWO IMPORTANT VISITORS AT BEECHWOOD, WITH A SKETCH OF THEIR CHARACTERS.

IN this uncomfortable ſtate were the inhabitants of Beechwood when the arrival of Mr. Stanley and Lord Charles Blair was announced; but, before they deſcend from his Lordſhip's phaeton, and we attend them into the library, I will preſent my reader with a ſhort ſketch of their characters. The former was the only brother of Mrs. Dorville; a man of no ſhining abilities; nor was he diſtinguiſhed from the common herd of mankind

kind by his rank or fortune. His father was an attorney in conſiderable practice, and, as is frequently the caſe, bred up his ſon for a counſellor. He was regularly educated; at the uſual time called to the bar; and attended the circuits for ſeveral years, without being encumbered with many briefs. The reſt of his time he ſpent in London; much at leiſure, with reſpect to the law; but he had abundance of other employment. His mornings were chiefly paſſed in attending rehearſals at the different theatres; auctions of pictures, in which he pretended to wonderful *connoiſſeurſhip*; or in carefully inveſtigating the goods of different pawnbrokers, in ſearch of *antiques*, of which he boaſted that he had made a valuable collection at a ſmall expence. His evenings were devoted to what he termed the *beſt company*; and he joyfully reſigned a conſiderable part of his income, at the gold whiſt table,

to have the honour of now and then playing with an old counteſs dowager, or an infirm baronet: for, after all, the ſet into which he had, with difficulty, gained admiſſion, was far from being of the higheſt rank: but they poſſeſſed much of that comfortable quality, ſelf-conceit; and Mr. Stanley endeavoured to perſuade himſelf, and all with whom he converſed, that they were very great people. At the death of his father, he found himſelf in poſſeſſion of about fourteen thouſand pounds; the family fortune not having been diminiſhed by Colonel Dorville, who, enchanted with the extreme beauty of his wife, refuſed to accept any other dowry. This ſum he ſunk for a life annuity, which enabled him to put in execution his favourite ſcheme of ſpending a few years abroad. During his ſtay at Rome, he became, at leaſt in his own opinion, a compleat *amateur*; and, full of the pleaſing idea of his uncommon

common taſte and judgment in all that relates to the fine arts, after compleating the tour of Italy and France, loaden with pictures and curioſities, which his ſtrict attention to oeconomy had enabled him to purchaſe, he turned his face towards his native country. On his way home, he had the extreme good fortune to have an opportunity of obliging Lord Charles Blair, only brother to the Duke of Dunbeath, whoſe carriage breaking down in a very bad road, juſt as Mr. Stanley overtook him, he gladly accepted the offer of a conveyance to the end of the ſtage in his. In the courſe of their ride, muſic and pictures were talked of; and happening to agree in their taſte and ſentiments on theſe intereſting ſubjects, they became mutually pleaſed with each other, and, as they were going the ſame road, agreed to travel together to London.

LORD Charles was about five and thirty; genteel in his perſon; and, ſetting aſide a little of that ſelf conſequence which a conſciouſneſs of ſuperior rank often gives to a man when in company with his inferiors, not unpleaſing in his addreſs and manners. He was neither deficient in underſtanding or good-nature; though an affected air of indifference and inſenſibility ſometimes threw a ſhade over both theſe deſirable qualities. He had been induced to viſit Beechwood more in compliance with Mr. Stanley's very preſſing invitations, than in the hope of finding any amuſement there; though he had been told much of the beauty and accompliſhments of the Miſs Dorvilles. He was not apt to be ſtruck with female merit; and though preſſed to marry by his brother, who was hopeleſs of having a nearer heir to his title and eſtates, had never yet ſeen a lady whoſe attractions were powerful enough to induce his compliance.

MR.

Mr. Stanley had not ſeen his nieces ſince his return from abroad; but from the accounts he had heard of them from different people, he was not without hopes that one of them might captivate his noble friend, and he might live to be the uncle of a ducheſs. There was rapture in the thought! What conſequence, what dignity would it beſtow upon him? To attend her routs at the duke's great houſe in Berkley Square, and to make her and them the ſubjects of his diſcourſe in inferior parties, where he ſhould be liſtened to with reſpectful admiration! It was a degree of bliſs he could never have hoped to obtain; and as ſoon as he was ſure of being able to bring his Lordſhip to Beechwood, he wrote the letter which has been before mentioned to his ſiſter; telling her all his hopes, and preſſing her, as ſhe regarded the future advancement of her family, which he knew to be an ob-

ject

ject near her heart, to uſe every method in her power to forward his plan. He good-naturedly cautioned her, in a poſt-ſcript, againſt acquainting her daughters with the ſcheme; becauſe if, contrary to his hopes, it ſhould fail, the diſappointment would doubtleſs be a painful one.

Mrs. Dorville was as much dazzled and facinated with a proſpect of future elevation as her brother; and the moment ſhe heard the gentlemen were arrived, loſt all recollection of poor Maria, and, which was more wonderful, of her own illneſs; and deſiring Arabella, who was, as uſual, in her apartment, to go down and receive them, ſaid ſhe would follow her in half an hour. She obeyed her commands in the moſt graceful manner. Lord Charles, to whom ſhe was preſented by her uncle with great ceremony, was viſibly ſtruck with her appearance and

manner, and addreſſed her with a degree of reſpect he had never before payed to an untitled lady.

Mr. Stanley had been informed of the flight of Maria, in a very circumſtantial manner, by the landlord of the houſe where they had breakfaſted that morning; and was ſo eager in his enquiries concerning that unfortunate affair, that he ſeemed almoſt to have forgotten the attention due to their noble gueſt. Arabella, in a few words, anſwered them as far as ſhe was able; and would have quitted the ſubject, which was, indeed, very painful to her, but his vexation would fine utterance. "Good heavens!" cried he, "that a daughter of Colonel Dorville's, a young lady of her rank, ſhould ſo demean herſelf. Her father, my Lord, was the laſt male of one of the moſt ancient families in the kingdom: his mother

was

was nearly allied to nobility. How has ſhe diſgraced, lowered us all!"

"You will pardon me," replied his Lordſhip, "if I differ from you in that point: the imprudence of the young lady can reflect no diſhonour upon her friends. Beſides, Mr. Berkley is no deſpicable man: he had free acceſs to Dunbeath caſtle while his regiment was in its neighbourhood; and if I may be allowed to judge from a ſlight acquaintance, he is ſenſible, and not uninformed; though, from the merits of your ſiſter," turning to Arabella, "he may be infinitely her inferior. You have the conſolation of knowing that many ladies have done worſe."

"You forget, Sir," anſwered ſhe, "that ſhe has left Mr. Berkley; and that I am ignorant where, or in what ſituation, ſhe is at this moment."

"THAT

"THAT circumſtance had, indeed, eſcaped my memory: but can we draw no relief from it? She has, at all events, eſcaped an unequal and improper marriage; and we will hope a little time will reſtore her to the amiable family whom the ſhort liv'd folly of a day induced her to deſert. Deareſt Madam, let the cloud, which now hangs over the lovelieſt face in the world, fly before the ſun of hope. We Scots, you know, have the gift of ſecond ſight; and I clearly foreſee that all will terminate juſt as you wiſh."

ARABELLA endeavoured to ſmile; but a tear, which roſe in her eye too plainly, evinced the ſituation of her mind; and a deep ſigh eſcaped her. "Nay, Miſs Dorville," ſaid her uncle, whoſe feelings of the ſofter kind were never very powerful, "ſuffer not your concern for this unfortunate affair to make you forget your own dignity,

dignity, and the regard you owe to the other branches of your family. All our hopes muſt now depend upon your conduct; of the propriety of which, indeed, we have not the ſmalleſt reaſon to doubt."

"Excuse me, dear Sir," replied Arabella. "I will endeavour to conſole myſelf with the hope that our Maria will again return to be the delight and ornament of Beechwood."

"As for her returning to Beechwood," anſwered Mr. Stanley, "I am not ſure that it would be at all expedient. My ſiſter's unaccountable fondneſs for the country layed the foundation for this misfortune. It is very wrong to keep young people of fortune in retirement; it gives them ridiculous romantic notions, which they would have had no idea of, if they had

had been brought up in town, and early introduced into the beſt company. There was Sir Joſeph Braidwood's eldeſt daughter, who was educated with her grandmother in Yorkſhire—"

THE entrance of Mrs. Dorville prevented the completion of this eloquent harangue, and a converſation on indifferent ſubjects took place, to the great relief of Arabella, who felt the extreme impropriety of entertaining their gueſt on ſo diſagreeable a family occurrence. The day paſſed in a manner not unpleaſant upon the whole. Mrs. Dorville was quite in ſpirits, and exerted herſelf in an uncommon degree, which made ſome amends for the apparent uneaſineſs of her daughter. They ſtrolled in the Park after dinner; and Lord Charles, who really poſſeſſed a good taſte, was charmed with it, and the appearance of the country round, which,

which, he ſaid, he ſhould have great pleaſure in examining more minutely. Before ſupper Mr. Stanley, impatient to diſplay all his niece's attractions, led her to the harpſichord. She had not played many minutes before his Lordſhip placed himſelf behind her chair. He remained in mute attention during the firſt piece, and, at its concluſion, requeſted a ſecond of more than equal length. He was charmed with her perfect knowledge of thorough baſs; and declared, when ſhe quitted the inſtrument, that ſhe played with a degree of taſte and energy he had never before known in any Engliſh lady. He had no eyes or ears but for her during the remainder of the evening; and frequent looks of joy and congratulation paſſed between Mrs. Dorville and her brother, whoſe attention was ſo entirely, and ſo agreeably, engroſſed by the ſcene before them, as abſolutely to exclude all recollection of the poor forlorn Maria.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XV.

CONSISTS OF MISCELLANEOUS MATTER.

THE following morning, the weather being delightfully pleaſant, Mr. Stanley propoſed taking a ride, to ſhow his friend ſome of the views beſt worth his attention in their vicinity; and his Lordſhip, underſtanding that Miſs Dorville was an excellent horſe-woman, was very preſſing with her to accompany them. Her mother joined in the requeſt; but ſhe earneſtly begged to be excuſed; as ſhe every hour expected to ſee, or hear, from her ſiſter, and would, on no account, be abſent, when ſhe, or even a letter from her,

her, arrived. Lord Charles politely gave up the point: but her mother would have inſiſted upon it ſtill further, had not Mr. Stanley interpoſed, by telling his niece, that he would readily admit of her excuſe; for he thought a lady never appeared to leſs advantage than on horſeback, as it was, in his opinion, too maſculine an exerciſe to be conſiſtent with the delicacy of the ſex. His friend ſmiled a little ſatirically; but Arabella was glad to be freed from importunities which it would have been ſo painful to her to comply with. The morning was, with her, a very tedious one. She had time to reflect upon all ſhe knew, or could gueſs, of her poor Maria's ſituation. When ſhe thought on her forlorn, unprotected condition, her youth, her beauty, and, more than all, the raſh inconſiderateneſs of her temper, ſhe was filled with apprehenſions the moſt gloomy. "Oh," thought ſhe,

ſhe, " if the dear parent, whoſe loſs we have now more occaſion than ever to regret, if *he* were here, he would move heaven and earth to find her. It would be vain for her to endeavour to conceal herſelf from an anxious, fond father; he would draw the trembler from her diſmal retreat, and claſp her in his arms, foſter her in his boſom, as I, her doating, but weak, powerleſs ſiſter, now pant to do. But ſhe had never erred, had he been her guide and protector: his gentle hand had led her along the ſmooth path of rectitude, which nature formed her to tread with undeviating feet! Oh, return, return, deareſt ſiſter! I, at leaſt, will ſupport thee, if thy remaining parent is proof againſt thy repentant tears; and, in a few months, it will be in my power, in ſome meaſure, to ſupply her place.—" There was ſome conſolation in that thought, and ſhe dwelt upon it with a

degree

degree of pleaſure; but it increaſed her impatience to gain ſome intelligence of the fugitive: none, however, arrived; and the traces of grief, which ſhe had freely indulged during their abſence, were ſtill viſible on her face when the gentlemen returned. "Fie upon it, fie upon it," cried her uncle, as he entered the drawing room: "do you ſtill give way to ſorrow for the abſence of your unworthy ſiſter? Let me tell you, Miſs Dorville, it would better become you to baniſh from your affections one who has given ſo unequivocal a proof of her entire diſregard for you, and all her family; one who has a plebian mind, whatever her perſon or attainments may be."

"DID you know my Maria," anſwered Arabella, with ſome warmth, "had you ſeen her, amiable and engaging as ſhe was, you could not ſpeak ſo harſhly of her."

"HER perfections," replied he, "only aggravate her fault. What might not ſuch a lady have expected? But, after this diſgraceful double elopement, what man of rank will think of her? I proteſt, was I my ſiſter, I would ſhut her up in a convent."

"LET me beg of you," ſaid Lord Charles, "not to add to the diſtreſs of your charming niece, whoſe concern, and even the exceſs of it, conſidering the cauſe, muſt give to every mind of ſenſibility an additional reaſon for admiring her. I am enchanted, dear Madam, with your country: Glamorganſhire is ſurely the Eden of South Wales. We have beheld this morning ſuch an aſſemblage of rock, wood, and water, ſo happily diſpoſed, that I already feel myſelf better reconciled to this foggy iſland of ours, than I once thought it poſſible I ever ſhould have been. You have agreeable neighbours

too: I had the pleaſure of meeting Mr. Courteney, and my old friend Sir George Brudenell, this morning; but he is not a reſident here."

No," replied Arabella, an involuntary ſigh eſcaping her. "I fear a very ſhort time will deprive us of his company. Are you intimate with him?"

"I was ſix weeks at Montpelier during his long attendance upon his mother there; but, in the latter part of that time, I ſaw little of him; for ſhe became very ill, and he was ſcarce ever out of her apartments, not once appearing in public."

"How happy was Lady Brudenell in ſuch a ſon!" cried Arabella, her countenance re-animating.

"Why, I ſuppoſe ſhe thought herſelf ſo," replied his Lordſhip, with a careleſs air. "Few men, of his age and ſpirit, would have confined themſelves to a ſick houſe for a month; but he had always a ſtrong ſpice of the romantic about him; though

though we muſt do him the juſtice to allow that his exceſſes were of the amiable kind: if his fortune fails, it will not be his *own* expences that undo him."

"Is there any danger of that kind?" anxiouſly enquired Arabella.

"WHY, ſome of his generous flights are ſo high, that I ſhould imagine no income could allow of them with prudence; and he does a thouſand things that the world never hears of; for he impoſes ſtrict ſecrecy upon all whom he benefits; and, as he by no means confines his bounty to thoſe who are commonly called objects of charity, many are doubtleſs glad to ſave their pride by rigidly complying with his requeſt."

"I HOPE," ſaid Arabella, her eyes ſhining with their full radience, and a fluſh of pleaſure glowing on her cheeks, "I hope, for the good of mankind, for the honour of human nature, the ſource

from which ſuch benevolence flows will never be exhauſted."

"SIR George would be a happy man," cried his Lordſhip, "if he ſaw the beautiful emotion which his good deeds have called forth into the loveliеſt face in the world."

"THAT emotion," ſaid Mr. Stanley, ſomewhat angrily, "might as well be ſurpreſſed, however beautiful, unleſs a properer occaſion had juſtified it. I have no notion of thoſe flights which your Lordſhip ſo juſtly terms romantic; every man has a right to the uſe of his own fortune, and he is a fool who walks on foot to enable others to ride in their carriages. If Sir George diſſipates his fortune, contempt, inſtead of praiſe, will deſervedly be his portion."

"NAY, I never heard that he was likely to do ſo," replied my Lord. "His eſtates are nearly as conſiderable as thoſe of any commoner in the kingdom; and he had

had the advantage of a long minority. He lives too at a trifling expence: he has no houſe, of courſe a very ſmall eſtabliſhment, and never plays."

"I WONDER then," returned Mr. Stanley, "how he contrives to keep the beſt company. Indeed, it is impoſſible, if he goes on in ſo ſhabby a manner. I do not recollect ſeeing him at a ſingle rout laſt winter."

"HE is well received every where," replied his Lordſhip. "Nay, his company is courted by people of the firſt diſtinction, which is not at all extraordinary, conſidering his connections, fortune, and accompliſhments."

"DINNER being announced, the converſation, which had been highly intereſting to Arabella, was put an end to; and the moment ſhe entered the dining parlour, and beheld her mother and Miſs Marſhall, a melancholy train of ideas again took poſſeſſion of her breaſt; and it

was not without the painful efforts which ſhe had now been accuſtomed for many days to exert, that ſhe kept up a tolerable degree of chearfulneſs. She was not diſpleaſed, however, to hear that her uncle had engaged Sir George and Mr. Courteney to dine with them the following day; though ſhe could well have excuſed the addition her mother made to the party, by inviting the female part of the family, her ſpirits being in ſo weak a ſtate, that it appeared quite tremendous to her to ſupport, for a whole day, the company of Lady Anne and her daughter.

The evening was ſpent in much the ſame manner as the preceding one had been, except that, to indulge Mr. Stanley, the whiſt table was ſubſtituted inſtead of the agreeable walk they had enjoyed the day before; for that gentleman had, thro' life, ſeldom ſtudied the pleaſure of more than *one* perſon; who that one was I leave the ſagacious reader to gueſs; and having perceived

perceived ſome ſymptoms of an approaching cold, which he attributed to the evening dew which he had been ſo recently expoſed to, he reſolved not to venture out again at the ſame dangerous hour. Indeed, it was his maxim that no wiſe man would, at any time of the year, walk out after ſun-ſet. Lord Charles was not diſpleaſed at hearing his ſentiments on this ſubject, for he thought it would give him many opportunities of having delightful *têtê-a-têtês* with Arabella, for whom, in ſpite of his accuſtomed inſenſibility, he began to feel a ſentiment warmer and more powerful than admiration.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTAINS, BESIDES OTHER PARTICULARS, THE RECEIT OF A LETTER FROM MARIA.

SOON after three the next day, the Courteneys, accompanied by Sir George Brudenell and Mrs. Harley, arrived. The widow had apparently recovered all her former ſpirits; nay, they ſeemed, if poſſible, greater than ever; and ſhe addreſſed the family at Beechwood with as much eaſy and aſſured familiarity as if nothing had happened: nor did ſhe appear to perceive the extreme coldneſs with which her compliments were returned by all but Miſs Marſhall, whoſe overſtrained civility made the neglect of Mrs. and Miſs Dorville

Dorville more ſtrikingly apparent. But her conſequence was pretty well kept up by Lady Anne, who treated her with the greateſt kindneſs and attention; and Miſs Courteney ſeemed even childiſhly fond of her. Arabella aſſumed a tolerable degree of chearfulneſs, but it was not accompanied with her uſual eaſe; her ſmiles were forced, and you could ſcarce ſay you ſaw them before they diſappeared. Sir George was leſs lively than ſhe had ever before ſeen him: ſhe thought ſhe perceived in his eyes a tender ſenſibility, which ſeemed to ſay he participated in her ſorrow. This was a conſolatory thought, but ſhe was not now at liberty to indulge it.

As ſoon as the ladies retired to the drawing room after dinner, Miſs Courteney ſat down to the harpſichord, and continued running over a number of different pieces; for ſhe had no ear, though her execution was good; while the reſt of the party ſtood chatting at a window,

till Lord Charles and Sir George entered the room. The former ſtood a few moments by the inſtrument, and then careleſsly walked towards the other ladies; but Sir George, politely placing a favourite concerto before Miſs Courteney, told her, if ſhe would favour them with that piece, ſhe might employ the charming rapidity of her fingers with great effect; and though his looks exhibited no particular tokens of delight, he continued ſtanding at the back of her chair till ſhe had finiſhed it. He did not aſk for another; and the moment ſhe left the harpſichord, Lord Charles intreated Miſs Dorville to take her place, which ſhe did with a winning gracefulneſs. Her ſtile of playing was ſo maſterly, and, at the ſame time, ſo expreſſive, that it facinated all hearers whom nature had not abſolutely denied the exquiſite pleaſure of being "charmed with concord of ſweet ſounds." The party at the window drew chairs near the harpſichord; and

all

all ſeemed loſt in attention, except Miſs Courteney and Mrs. Harley, whoſe ſmiles, and frequent whiſpers, proved that their thoughts were differently occupied. When ſhe had finiſhed a piece of conſiderable length, which my Lord had ſelected for her, Sir George requeſted a ſong, and placed that beautiful piece of Gay's, "'Twas when the ſeas were roaring," &c. on the inſtrument. She began it in a low key: indeed, ſhe was not able greatly to exert herſelf; but her voice was ſo *ſoft*, ſo *touching*, that the Baronet, who, in the firſt part, had accompanied her on the German flute, of which he was a compleat maſter, reſigned it into the hands of Lord Charles, whoſe feelings were leſs acute; and placing himſelf oppoſite to the lovely ſinger, forgot all his wiſe reſolutions, forgot his determination to ſcrutenize her character, to bring every ſemblance of a fault to view, and rivetting his eyes on her charming face, which ex-

preſſed a more than uſual degree of ſoftneſs, his very ſoul was melted by the united powers of beauty, poetry, and muſic. As ſhe finiſhed the affecting recitative which concludes the piece, her eye, in which a tear trembled, met his—What a moment was that!—To deſcribe their feelings to minds of exquiſite ſenſibility would be unneceſſary, and to all others impoſſible.

The entrance of the other gentlemen, and ſervants with coffee, &c. was a ſeaſonable relief. The reſt of the party ſoon entered into a lively general converſation, in which Arabella ſcarce attempted to join, and Sir George only when he was particularly called upon. Mr. Stanley could prevail upon no other part of the company than Lady Anne and his ſiſter to join him at the whiſt table; even Miſs Marſhall unwillingly conſented to leave her dear friend, and make a fourth; while the reſt of the party prepared for a walk,

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the evening being particularly inviting. Sir George had been before hand with each of the other gentlemen in offering Arabella his arm, and he warmly refuſed to reſign her; though Mr. Courteney declared it was a breach of ancient cuſtom and privilege, which he could hardly ſubmit to. The lively widow, however, did all in her power to reconcile him to his diſappointment; and Miſs Courteney exerted all her powers to baniſh from the countenance of Lord Charles a look of vexation, which he had not been able entirely to conceal. They directed their ſteps towards the beautiful dell; and as, when they quitted the Park, the path became narrow and winding, the three different parties were of courſe frequently at ſome diſtance from each other. Sir George and his fair companion were the laſt, and, it may be ſuppoſed, did not hurry on to overtake the reſt: indeed, they ſoon forgot their very exiſtence. "Will you ſuffer me, dear

dear Madam," ſaid the Baronet, as ſoon as they had loſt ſight of Mr. Courteney and Mrs. Harley, " to drop the ſtile and manner of a mere acquaintance, and addreſs you as a friend? Will you permit me to ſpeak to you on the ſubject which I know is neareſt to your heart?"

" MOST willingly," replied Arabella; " no other can at preſent intereſt me: it is irkſome to me to ſpeak of any thing but my poor Maria; my ſad uncertainty with reſpect to her, my fears for her, occupy all my thoughts."

" I WONDER not at your anxiety and diſtreſs; I knew it would be great: I felt for you the moment I was informed of the unfortunate affair. But can nothing be done towards relieving you? Has every probable means been employed to trace her ſteps?"

" MR. Berkley has doubtleſs done every thing in his power; but my mother would not be perſuaded to do any thing."

" Do,

"Do I preſume too much upon your goodneſs, when I aſk you to inveſt me with a power to make ſome enquiries after her? I have a ſervant, upon whoſe addreſs, vigilance, and prudence, I can rely: ſuffer me to ſend him to Abergavenny; ſomething tells me that I ſhall have the happineſs of reſtoring your lovely ſiſter to you."

"My gratitude," anſwered Arabella, "will be beſt expreſſed by my ready acceptance of your offer; and I have no doubt but, under your direction, his enquiries will be made in the propereſt manner, that the dear creature's name may be as little as poſſible the ſubject of public attention and converſation.—Alas! it is too much ſo already."

"You may aſſure yourſelf, deareſt Madam, that every poſſible precaution ſhall be uſed on that head. How inexpreſſibly happy ſhall I be, if I can ſucceed in diſcovering her retreat!" His hand involuntarily

tarily preſſed hers—" Harris ſhall ſet out to-night—."

He would have ſaid more; but they perceived Mrs. Johnſon, with a folded paper held out in her hand, running towards them. The glowing colour which exerciſe had painted on the cheeks of Arabella inſtantly forſook them; and ſhe would not have been able to move a ſtep, though eager in her attempts ſo to do, had not Sir George ſupported her. " Who, who," ſhe cried with extreme eagerneſs, " who is it from?" " Dear Madam," anſwered Johnſon, almoſt out of breath, " you will now be happy; here is a letter from Miſs Maria."

She ſnatched it from her haſtily; and ſeeing the direction in her ſiſter's hand, preſſed it paſſionately to her lips; then tore it open, and began to read, or rather attempted to do ſo; but her emotions had been too violent; her eyes dazzled, and her limbs were unable to ſupport her. Sir George

George held her in his arms, while her woman, by the aſſiſtance of ſalts, juſt kept her from fainting. She continued ſome minutes in this condition, ſcarce appearing to breathe, when, to the exquiſite ſatisfaction of her lover, who hung over her with a painful degree of anxiety, ſhe heaved a deep ſigh; her countenance began to re-animate; a beautiful vermillion returned to her lips; and more than their uſual ſhare to her lovely cheeks, the moment ſhe was conſcious of her ſituation: but all other conſiderations were quickly loſt in her anxiety for her ſiſter; and the inſtant ſhe was able to ſpeak, ſhe eagerly enquired for the letter. "Not yet, dear Madam," ſaid Sir George, tenderly: "you are unequal to the peruſal of it; be perſuaded to delay it till we reach the houſe?"

"Oh, that is impoſſible," returned ſhe. "I will ſit here," pointing to the ſtump of an aged tree, "while Johnſon reads it;

it; for in her I can confide, whatever may be its contents; and you, Sir, will, I know, be a kind participater of the pleaſure which I truſt it will communicate."

CHARMED with this permiſſion, he ſeated himſelf by her ſide, and Johnſon read as follows:

" How, after what I have done, after the diſgrace which I have brought upon myſelf and her, can I venture to addreſs my Arabella? Think not, deareſt of ſiſters, that I mean to excuſe or palliate my crime, or aſk even your forgiveneſs, much leſs your interceſſion where I well know it would be fruitleſs: I have no ſuch deſign. The fault I have committed was wholly my own; and the puniſhment, ſo far as I am able to prevent it, ſhall ſpread no further. I know how wretched your uncertainty reſpecting me, at this moment, renders you; and I write to remove that uneaſineſs, as far as I can conſiſtently with the plan I have, at leaſt for the preſent, adopted, which

which is to keep myſelf concealed. I will not tell even you what were the motives which induced me to fly from the man whom a few hours before I appeared to prefer to all the world; I will only ſay, that my diſguſt aroſe from no part of his behaviour. No, my Arabella, (while at a diſtance, and concealed from you, I can yet venture to call you by that tender name,) your ſiſter was never reduced ſo low as to be ſubjected to a perſonal inſult. Let your gentle feeling heart be ſatisfied, when I aſſure you that I might have been more miſerable than I am. At preſent I feel the moſt inſurmountable repugnance to the idea of ſeeing any perſon whom I have known in happier days; ſhould it laſt long, I may never behold any of them again. My heart ſinks within me at the thought; but I can ſubmit to any hardſhips rather than offer unavailing ſupplications to an unfeeling parent, or bear the inſulting taunts, and heavy chains, which

it would be my inſupportable lot to endure from the woman I deteſt, even if your goodneſs could reſtore me to the home from whence I fled. All that I have to requeſt of you, my *only* friend, is to ceaſe all enquiry concerning me. If ever you loved your poor Maria, comply with it; if you do not, it may make her deſperate, and I cannot anſwer for the conſequences. It is all you can at preſent do to leſſen the anguiſh of your ever affectionate and grateful,

MARIA DORVILLE.

" *P. S.* Be ſo good as to give Mrs. Harley thirty guineas, the ſum ſhe gave Edwards to induce her to attend me in my flight; and repay yourſelf out of my half year's income, which will be due in a few weeks. To take any thing from your ſtore, would be to rob the poor and unfortunate.

" Perhaps you may hear from me again—I dare not think of addreſſing my mother;

mother; the idea of her angry frown would kill me."

Poor Arabella liſtened with the moſt eager attention to this affecting letter. She was ſcarce able to contend with the variety of painful emotions which ſucceeded each other in her boſom. At the concluſion of it, Sir George feared a relapſe into the ſame melancholy condition from which ſhe had ſo recently recovered: he would again have ſupported her in his arms, but ſhe bid him forbear, by gently waving her hand; and throwing a handkerchief over her face, reclined againſt the tree, and a plentiful ſhower of tears flowed from her bright eyes. At length recollecting herſelf, ſhe uncovered her face, and aſſuming a more compoſed look, turned towards Sir George: "From any man but yourſelf," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhould deſpair of an excuſe for the extreme weakneſs I have betrayed; but I know you generouſly ſympathize in my concern, and

and pity the dear creature who occaſions it. Yet I ought to apologize for the pain and trouble which I have involuntarily given you."

"NAME it not, moſt amiable, moſt excellent of women," replied he paſſionately: "If I have been, or could be, inſtrumental to your eaſe or conſolation, I ſhall eſteem myſelf moſt fortunate."

"YOU are very good," anſwered ſhe, riſing. "It grows duſk, and I think I am now able to walk." She could not deny him the pleaſure of aſſiſting her; and leaning on his arm, Johnſon following at a little diſtance, they moved ſlowly forward towards the houſe. On their arrival there, they were informed that the reſt of the party had been returned ſome time, and, together with thoſe who ſtayed at home, were aſſembled in the drawing room. Arabella ſat down with Sir George, for a few minutes, in the library; and feeling herſelf unable to ſee any company

that evening, begged he would again accept her thanks and apologies for what he had ſo lately ſuffered on her account, and ſtill more for what he meant to do, which, in compliance with her ſiſter's earneſt requeſt, ſhe would at leaſt poſtpone for the preſent. He reſpectfully took her hand, and venturing to preſs it to his lips, aſſured her, the happieſt moments of his life were thoſe in which he had an opportunity of rendering himſelf in any degree acceptable to her. He then reluctantly left her; and ſhe conſidered a few moments whether it would be proper, at that time, to communicate the contents of Maria's letter to her mother, but ſoon reſolved to defer it till the next morning. She left a polite meſſage, pleading indiſpoſition as a reaſon for her not appearing in the drawing room, for Johnſon to deliver to Mrs. Dorville, and retired to her apartment for the night.

NONE of the female viſitants were in the leaſt diſturbed at her abſence; they declared their ſurprize at her attempting to take ſo long a walk, when ſhe was apparently ſo unwell, and out of ſpirits. But though this was even an agreeable circumſtance to moſt of the party, the day did not conclude ſo pleaſantly as it began: Sir George was remarkably abſent; Lord Charles ſilent, and inattentive; and the Courteneys evidently *endeavoured* to be gay, and *laboured* to appear eaſy. All feeling themſelves reſtrained and uncomfortable, the viſit was of courſe ſhortened. Soon after ſupper Miſs Courteney complained of a violent head-ach; and, as ſoon as they decently could, they took their leave; the three ladies going home in the coach, and the gentlemen on horſe-back.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL BE ENTERTAINED WITH AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION BETWEEN THREE DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS IN OUR HISTORY.

THEY were ſcarce ſeated in their carriage, when Lady Anne addreſſed her daughter in no very gentle tone, "Upon my word, Miſs Courteney, you have performed your part very judiciouſly this evening: I am quite delighted with the amazing addreſs you have diſplayed; to ſuffer Sir George and Miſs Dorville to have ſo comfortable a *tête-a-tête*, was really very obliging."

"LORD, Lady Anne," replied Miſs Julia, "you are always ſure to ſcold me if any thing happens wrong. I ſaw, the inſtant we returned from walking, how angry you were."

"AND had I not reaſon? Could any thing be more abſurd, more compleatly ſilly, than your conduct? Ridiculous, weak girl, to undo, by your own folly, all that I have endeavoured to do for you."

"WHATEVER your endeavours may have been, I am ſure I ſee no proſpect of their ſucceſs. I had my reaſons for acting in the manner I did; but I hate to be taken to taſk, and ſcolded like a child. I am ſurely old enough now to be permitted to act for myſelf."

"OH, your prudence is indiſputable, to be ſure—But if it is your will and pleaſure, and it be not inconſiſtent with your deep laid ſchemes, pray let me know what your reaſons were."

"I DON'T

"I DON'T know whether I will or no—I was out of humour before you began this pretty lecture; and you know I am not to be teazed into any thing,"

"WILL you give me leave to explain your motives?" interrupted Mrs. Harley. "Your plan was certainly a good one, and an unlucky concurrence of events alone defeated it."

"No, no," replied Miſs Courteney; "you know I would rather be a ſpeaker than a hearer at any time; ſo to pleaſe myſelf, more than to oblige Lady Anne, I will condeſcend to explain matters. In the firſt place then, you know, I ſet out this morning in high ſpirits towards Beechwood, not doubting I ſhould have a decided advantage in Brudenell's eyes over Miſs Dorville for at leaſt that day, as I knew ſhe would be in the *diſmals*, and I determined to be livelier than uſual, that the contraſt might be more conſpicuouſly ſtriking. By the way, let me tell you, that I heard him ſay but yeſterday, that

he thought a regular flow of lively chearful ſpirits a great recommendation to any lady as a companion for life. If that is the caſe, thought I, I know who will ſuit you. But, to proceed with my account, I mounted the beautiful horſe Sir George gave me, and forcing my father into the coach, bid the ſervants keep at an awful diſtance on account of the duſt, that he might have an opportunity of ſaying all he had a mind to me. Well, we ſet out; and I thought I never ſaw a man look ſo handſome, ſo gallant, ſo ſpirited in my life. I really half reſolved to promiſe him to be Lady Brudenell the very firſt time he aſked me, which I concluded he muſt do in the courſe of the ride. But, O the inſufferable wretch! though our horſes went as ſlow as one foot could follow another, that he might not loſe the ſmiles, ogles, and tender glances which I ſucceſſively directed full in his eyes, he remained abſolutely unmoved; I might have played off my artillery on his horſe with full as much effect. He, indeed,

returned

returned me ſmile for ſmile; but they were ſuch as he might have beſtowed upon his grand-mother. After entertaining, or rather ſtupifying, me, for one half of the way, with animadverſions upon the appearance of the country, and compariſons between it and ſome that he had ſeen upon the continent, the horrid creature had the aſſurance to introduce the family at Beechwood. I loſt all patience, and ſet my horſe on a full canter, which brought us in a ſhort time to the place where the few weak affections he has, are, I believe, depoſited. When Mr. Stanley introduced me to Lord Charles Blair, I thought he viewed me with a particular degree of attention; and it came inſtantly into my head, that it would be no bad plan to devote the day to him, and try whether he was compoſed of as hard materials as the Baronet. Beſides, I was particularly diſpoſed to try if I could not rob Miſs Dorville of her new lover, and diſappoint her ridiculous old uncle, who watches every turn of his Lordſhip's

eye. I told Mrs. Harley my ſcheme; and we agreed to propoſe a walk, in which we had no doubt but my father would, as uſual, have taken charge of Miſs Dorville; and I hoped for the ſame compliment from his Lordſhip; but Sir George's provoking eagerneſs threw all into confuſion. So, if you muſt ſcold, pray take Mr. Courteney to taſk for not being beforehand with him; for you muſt own that he was more in fault than I."

"I FEAR," ſaid Mrs. Harley, "a part of the fault will fall upon me; but we really loſt ſight of them before I was aware; and I had little doubt but they had turned into another walk, which would have rendered our ſeeking them a vain attempt."

"I DO not in the leaſt blame you," replied her Ladyſhip, with great condeſcenſion: "we are much obliged to you for the intereſt you take in our little plans, which, at leaſt, are rather matters of amuſement than ſerious ſchemes: but, immerſed, as we are, in this almoſt ſavage country, one muſt

do

do ſomething to keep one awake; alive I might ſay, for how is it poſſible to exiſt without ſome purſuit? But pray, Miſs Courteney, what did you make of Lord Charles?"

"WHY, nothing at all: he is as impenetrable as Sir George, without half his good humour and ſpritelineſs: he ſcarce looked at me in the whole courſe of the walk! How I longed to try, by juſt ſuch a pinch as I uſed to give Berkley, whether his corporeal feelings were more acute than his mental! I have really quite an averſion to him; and wonder how I could be ſilly enough to caſt away a thought upon ſo ſtupid an animal."

"You thought of him," replied Lady Anne," becauſe he is a man of rank; and, notwithſtanding all you ſay, has really a great deal of faſhion about him. You are fond of the ſociety in London, and he is the exact counterpart of three parts of the men you converſed with there."

"BUT their numbers make up for the deficiency of each individual. Beſides, I

was continually comparing him with Brudenell."

"WHY, Julia," cried her Ladyſhip, laughing, "I really believe you are in love! Poor thing," tapping her cheek, "if its heart is affected, we muſt try what we can do for it.—Will you give your aſſiſtance?"

"MOST readily," anſwered Mrs. Harley. "If no declaration has been made, (and I hope we need not fear that,) I will rack my invention for ſome means to prevent one. I am really exceſſively intereſted in this matter. We will not let ſuch a prude carry off one of the fineſt young men in the kingdom; and, ſeriouſly ſpeaking, I know no one who would be a properer wife, in every reſpect, for him than Miſs Courteney."

"WELL, I aſſure you," replied Julia, "when I am Lady Brudenell, (and I have heard that many marriages are brought about by ſtratagem,) you ſhall be ſecond in command."

THE

THE widow thanked her for her kind promiſe, which ſhe told her ſhe had no doubt but a few weeks would put it into her power to fulfil. Theſe, however, were far from being her real ſentiments: ſhe had diſcernment enough to ſee that it was highly improbable that Sir George ſhould attach himſelf to Miſs Courteney, even if they could find means to draw him from his preſent purſuit; but her diſlike to, and reſentment againſt, Miſs Dorville, ſtrongly incited her to do every thing in her power to injure her; and, excluſive of this malevolent pleaſure, her ſtay with the Courteneys was too convenient to ſuffer her to neglect any means of ingratiating herſelf with them, as the moſt likely method of prolonging it.

THE ladies ſtept out of the carriage at Llangorwel in tolerably good humour, and retired to their apartments, intent on forming ſome new ſcheme for the advancement of their grand deſign.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTAINS SOMETHING WHICH PARTICULARLY CONCERNS THE FUTURE HAPPINESS OF ARABELLA.

AS early as ſhe could gain admiſſion the following morning, Arabella attended in her mother's dreſſing room, to communicate to her the contents of the letter, which ſhe durſt not read entirely, on account of ſome expreſſions which ſhe knew would diſpleaſe her. Mrs. Dorville liſtened to her with increaſed anger: "Inſolent girl!" ſaid ſhe, "does ſhe thus dare to ſet me at defiance! Does ſhe conceal herſelf till I intreat her to return, till I offer her her own terms? No no; the condeſcenſion muſt be on her part;

part; and ſhe ſhall ſubmit, in every particular, before I will have any further connection with her.—But, pray who brought this letter?—I ſuppoſe ſhe may be traced by it?"

"I FEAR not," replied Arabella. "It came by the uſual conveyance; and the poſt mark is London, where I do not ſuppoſe ſhe herſelf is."

"YOUNG ladies of her turn," ſaid Mrs. Dorville, "are ſeldom at a loſs for contrivances: but ſhe may diſpoſe of herſelf how ſhe pleaſes, ſo ſhe does not return to Beechwood."

"DEAR Madam, you will not refuſe to receive her!"

"THAT I undoubtedly ſhall. Would it not be madneſs in me to riſk a repetition of the diſgrace ſhe has already brought upon us? I will never countenance her in any thing, but retiring to a convent till ſhe comes of age. This is my fixed determination; and, as I dare ſay you will ſoon hear from her again, you may inform her of it."

In vain did Arabella plead and ſupplicate; her mother continued reſolute; and, at length, forbid her to mention the ſubject again, till ſhe could ſubmit to her pleaſure with that readineſs which ſhe had always experienced from her till the fatal error of her ſiſter, which ſeemed to have had a ſtrange effect upon her.

Arabella retired grieved and mortified, but not ſurprized, at Mrs. Dorville's implacability, which was no more than, from her ſubſequent conduct, ſhe had reaſon to expect; and taking up her pen, wrote a note to Miſs Courteney, acquainting her "that her indiſpoſition, the preceding evening, aroſe from the extreme agitation of ſpirits into which ſhe was thrown by receiving a letter from her dear Maria, and her diſappointment in not being informed by it of the place of her retreat, or even of her motives for leaving the protector ſhe had choſen."

ARABELLA wiſhed to communicate theſe particulars, that the letter, which could, at preſent, be followed by no conſequences, and would therefore carry ſomewhat of an air of myſtery, might, as little as poſſible, excite the curioſity, and draw forth the conjectures, of the neighbourhood, from which ſhe thought her ſiſter's character would probably ſuffer more than from a general knowledge of the real truth; and ſhe knew that the telling of any thing to the loquacious Julia, was an effectual method of rendering it public. She ſent a ſmall parcel with the note, containing the thirty guineas, which, in a poſtſcript, ſhe requeſted might be given to Mrs. Harley. She diſdained to deduct the ten which were owing to herſelf; and the widow, on whom obligations never felt very burthenſome, took no further notice of them.

WHEN ſhe had ſent theſe away, ſhe ſtrolled into the Park, invited by the pleaſant gloomyneſs of the morning, which ſeemed peculiarly

ly ſuited to her feelings at that time. She had not proceeded far, before ſhe was joined by Lord Charles, who, after obſerving, with apparent concern, the pale languour of her countenance, condoled with her, in the moſt ſoothing terms, on the unfortunate cauſe of it. He mentioned her ſiſter in a manner ſo reſpectful, ſo delicate, that ſhe beheld him in a more pleaſing light than ſhe had ever done before; and knowing how far his perſuaſions would go at leaſt with her uncle, determined to inform him of her difficulties, and requeſt his aſſiſtance in favour of Maria. She did this in a manner the moſt pathetic and intereſting. Nature had beſtowed upon her an eloquence ſo ſimple, ſo exquiſitely affecting, when ſhe ſpoke on a ſubject near her heart, that it required an uncommon degree of reſolution, or inſenſibility, to reſiſt it. No wonder then that one already ſo partial to her ſhould be greatly moved. He was before her warm admirer, but, from this moment, he became her lover,

and elected her the arbitreſs of his future deſtiny. He eagerly embraced this opportunity of obliging her, and promiſed to exert every effort in his power according to her direction. They had, without intending it, prolonged their walk very conſiderably; but his Lordſhip's ſtate of mind was almoſt ſuch as to render him incapable of fatigue; and Arabella hoped ſo much from his mediation, that ſhe ſuffered little from hers. Her pleaſure, however, was damped, when ſhe was informed that Sir George had called during her abſence: ſhe could not loſe a ſingle opportunity of ſeeing and converſing with him without regret; yet ſhe conſoled herſelf with the conſideration, that, if he was ſo much her friend (ſhe was near ſubſtituting the word *lover*) as ſhe had reaſon to hope and believe him, he need not always be ſo diſtant and formal in his viſits as now.

After dinner my Lord requeſted an hour's converſation in the library with Mr. Stanley; and Arabella gueſſing what was to be the

the ſubject of it, though ſhe did not quite approve of the manner in which it was introduced, gave him a look full of grateful ſweetneſs when he left the room. But ſhe little ſuſpected that another, and, in his eſtimation, a weightier, point was firſt to be diſcuſſed; that he was making a formal declaration of his attachment to her, and propoſing, if his addreſſes were approved of by herſelf and family, to write immediately to the Duke his brother, on the ſubject of ſettlements, &c. for of obtaining his conſent to the alliance he had not the ſmalleſt doubt.

Mr. Stanley's pleaſure was for ſome minutes too great for utterance; and moſt profoundly bowing, his lips moved, but not a ſound eſcaped. His figure was ſo ludicrous, that, notwithſtanding the ſolemnity of the occaſion, his Lordſhip ſmiled: but had he laughed out, it would ſcarce have been obſerved by Mr. Stanley, ſo entirely was he loſt, I might ſay bewildered, in the bluſhing honours

honours which began ſo thickly to bud about him. At length, however, after the third bow, he heſitatingly replied, "I am deeply conſcious, my Lord, I am highly ſenſible of the honour your Lordſhip does Miſs Dorville, and, indeed, all her family and connections—the alliance muſt be greatly deſirable to us all,—and,—and—"

He could ſay no more. "I truſt the affections of your charming niece are diſengaged, and that I may flatter myſelf with a proſpect of obtaining them."

"Certainly they are," cried Mr. Stanley, eagerly. "There can be no doubt of that; and it is impoſſible that ſhe ſhould be inſenſible to the merits of your Lordſhip."

"From Mrs. Dorville, I think, I need not fear oppoſition: the Duke will, I know, enable me to make the moſt liberal ſettlements."

"His Grace is all condeſcenſion," replied Mr. Stanley, who was ſtill *in a wood.* "I will acquaint my niece and ſiſter with the

the honour intended them this very evening."

"No," interrupted Lord Charles: "oblige me in one particular; let me plead my own cauſe with the lovely Arabella. I truſt there will be no occaſion for maternal interpoſition: mention the affair, if you pleaſe, to Mrs. Dorville, but leave the reſt to me. One thing more I have to requeſt, and that is the entire, and unconditional, forgiveneſs of the fair Maria: if this is granted to my petition, I know it will contribute much to render the dear object of my hopes propitious."

"YOUR Lordſhip," anſwered the obſequious Mr. Stanley, "can, I am ſure, aſk nothing that will be refuſed: on the contrary, Mrs. Dorville will certainly feel herſelf highly flattered and obliged by the intereſt you condeſcend to take in her family arrangements."

THE conference, which had given perfect ſatisfaction to both parties, ended ſoon after; and

and the pleaſure which appeared in the countenance of each, when they entered the drawing room, convinced Arabella that her advocate had pleaded ſucceſsfully the cauſe of the poor culprit, which gave her a flow of ſpirits that animated her converſation and looks to a wonderful degree. She was all life and gaiety; and a plentiful portion of moſt bewitching ſmiles were beſtowed upon Lord Charles, to whom ſhe owed the hopes which rendered her ſo happy. Novel as they were to him, for he had never before ſeen her unaffectedly chearful, he was enchanted, enraptured, and every hour became more deeply enamoured.

At night when Mrs. Dorville retired to her dreſſing room, ſhe was attended by her brother, who hurried Arabella away as ſoon as poſſible, telling her he had ſomething to communicate to her mother, which, though it would not probably diſpleaſe her, it was not yet a proper time for her to hear. She had no doubts reſpecting his intentions, and went

went to her apartment with a much lighter heart than ſhe had done ſince the flight of her ſiſter, thinking herſelf almoſt ſecure of ſoon receiving a permiſſion for her to return: for ſhe was ſenſible that Mr. Stanley had great influence over her mother, and ſhe had now found the means of making him exert it, which her earneſt ſolicitations had failed to do.

Mrs. Dorville was not ſo much enchanted by Lord Charles's propoſal as her brother expected. She gave it as her opinion, that, advantageous as it was, there would be no ſmall difficulty in prevailing upon Arabella to accept of it; and declared ſhe believed there was ſome fatality attending her children; for ſhe ſeemed to have taken an unaccountable diſlike to his Lordſhip even before ſhe had ſeen him; and once that ſhe had mentioned him to her ſince his arrival, as a probable lover, ſhe had expreſſed the ſtrongeſt averſion to any idea of the kind.

Mr.

Mr. Stanley was equally amazed and irritated. He was no leſs paſſionate than his ſiſter; and forgetting the very refined character he had aſſumed, ſtarted up, ſtamped on the ground, and was on the very verge of ſwearing. When his rage had ſo far ſubſided as to permit his utterance, he enumerated all his Lordſhip's future titles and dignities; his vaſt fortune; and, laſtly, his accompliſhments, and the fine qualities of his mind. As an inſtance of the latter, he mentioned the generous requeſt he had ſo earneſtly made reſpecting Maria; and was proceeding moſt vehemently in his harangue, when he was ſuddenly interrupted by his ſiſter. "Stop, ſtop," cried ſhe, "I have thought of an expedient, which, I hope, will remove all our difficulties. Suppoſe I make her marriage with my Lord, the only means of procuring Maria's reinſtatement. Her extreme fondneſs for that imprudent girl, and her anxiety for her relief, will, I know, induce her to do much: and I am ſo reſolved

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upon ſeeing her Lady Charles Blair, which is a ſtep towards far higher dignities, that I will even offer the diſmiſſion of Miſs Marſhall, which, I know, will be highly agreeable to her."

"But what can be the reaſon of her ſtrange averſion to his Lordſhip?" ſaid Mr. Stanley. "I hope you do not ſuſpect any abſurd prepoſſeſſion; for if that is the caſe, it will be vain to attempt, or hope, to influence a girl of her large independent fortune, and within a few months of coming into full poſſeſſion."

"Why, I am a little doubtful about that," replied Mrs. Dorville. "I think nothing elſe can induce her to reject my Lord; but I am determined to carry my point, if it is within the bounds of poſſibility." She rung the bell. "I will conſult Miſs Marſhall about this matter: ſhe is very ſenſible, and has the good of my family much at heart."

In a few minutes the governeſs, partly equipped in her night, and partly in her day,

day, habiliments, appeared; but as, upon the whole, ſhe was tolerably *cloathed*, one fifth part of the horror and amazement which ſhe expreſſed on ſeeing Mr. Stanley, would have been fully ſufficient. At length, however, ſhe grew tolerably compoſed; and Mrs. Dorville explained the cauſe of her ſending for her at that time. Miſs Marſhall, wiſely ſhook her head at the concluſion of the relation; and declared ſhe feared it would be next to impoſſible to perſuade Miſs Dorville to marry any man who was not entirely her choice; for ſhe had often heard her ſpeak very particularly on that ſubject, and ſhe well knew the ſteadineſs of her temper.

"But do you think my ſcheme reſpecting Maria will have no effect?" cried Mrs. Dorville, haſtily.

"Not in obliging her to marry Lord Charles. I think you ſay the matter is to be propoſed to her to-morrow. Perhaps you may prevail with her, by a promiſe of favour to her ſiſter, to give him hope, at leaſt not entirely

entirly to reject him: I fear you will not get her to go further: but if ſhe will only comply ſo far, my Lord will not fail to write to the Duke upon it; and, after that, he may plead the encouragement ſhe has given him, and perſuade her that ſhe is bound in honour to marry him; which, I think, will be the moſt powerful argument to her that he can poſſibly make uſe of."

"YOUR ſcheme has an excellent face," ſaid Mr. Stanley, and I hope every thing from it. If we can but bring this matter about, Maria's unfortunate ſlip will be forgotten in the admiration which her ſiſter's ſplendor will univerſally attract. Beſide, ſhe will be removed to a very different ſcene of action: the preſent Duke of Dunbeath is many years older than his brother, and an abſolute invalid, therefore cannot be expected to hold out long. Seven years, I think, will be the outſide. Let me ſee, Maria comes of age in rather leſs than five years. Well, I think, conſidering every thing, it

is

is very improbable that his Grace will live longer than that. We will ſuppoſe him to die juſt at that time, or, perhaps, half a year, or ſuch a matter, before: to what infinite advantage will ſhe then appear, in the full bloom of beauty, juſt come into poſſeſſion of a conſiderable fortune, and accompanying the ducheſs to London, where ſhe will be preſented at court, and introduced to the firſt nobility, among whom ſhe cannot fail of marrying, perhaps, with a ſplendor equal to her ſiſter! We cannot be too thankful for her having eſcaped that low connection with Mr. Berkley."

"But great care ſhould be taken," cried Miſs Marſhall, eagerly, "that ſhe never comes in his way again!"

"Oh, never fear that," replied Mrs. Dorville. "I have not given up the convent ſcheme, however I may flatter Arabella."

ALL matters being thus agreed upon, the plotting triumvirate retired to their different apartments, highly ſatisfied with the plan they had deviſed, and ſanguine in their hopes of its ſucceſs. But, before Miſs Marſhall went to reſt, ſhe wrote a letter to Mrs. Harley, to acquaint her with what was going forward at Beechwood; for that *dear friend* had earneſtly requeſted her to do ſo, as hearing from her frequently would, ſhe ſaid, greatly alleviate the pains of abſence; and, in return, ſhe promiſed to inform her of all her own and her brother's proceedings. The offer of Lord Charles, and the reſolutions which had been taken in conſequence of it, was intelligence of ſo intereſting a nature, that ſhe determined to diſpatch a meſſenger with it to Llangorwel early the next day.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

SHEWS THAT ARABELLA'S FRIENDS HAVE MADE CHOICE OF A PERSON AS A HUSBAND FOR HER WHOM SHE NEVER MADE CHOICE OF FOR HERSELF.

POOR Arabella little ſuſpected the diſappointment which awaited her, when ſhe was ſummoned the following morning, earlier than uſual, into her mother's dreſſing room. Indeed, ſhe went with the greateſt pleaſure and alacrity, expecting the anxiouſly deſired change in the ſentence of Maria to be announced in form. But how greatly was ſhe ſhocked and hurt, when Mrs. Dorville, in terms of the high-

eſt pleaſure and exultation, acquainted her with the very advantageous offer which had been made her by Lord Charles; and intreated her, by the duty, love, and obedience, which ſhe had a natural right to expect from her, not lightly to reject it!

ARABELLA was greatly diſtreſſed to feel herſelf utterly unable to return the anſwer her mother wiſhed.—But her laſt interview with Sir George Brudenell had fully acquainted her with the ſtate of her heart. The extreme anxiety he had manifeſted for her on that trying occaſion, had awakened all her affections; and what Lord Charles had ſaid on the ſubject of his generoſity, and other amiable qualities, had wonderfully ſtrengthened her attachment to him. She was almoſt convinced too, that he was particularly attached to her. How then could ſhe liſten for a moment to the addreſſes of any other man? Her reply, which indicated, though in the gentleſt manner,

manner, her firm reſolution to refuſe his Lordſhip, did not at all ſurprize Mrs. Dorville; though ſhe affected to appear greatly ſhocked by it. "Surely," cried ſhe, "no mother was ever more unfortunate than I! While my youngeſt daughter openly defies my authority, the elder, from whom I expected all my ſupport and conſolation, determines to lend her aſſiſtance in compleating my miſery.—Oh, Arabella, I did not look for this from you."

"DEAREST Madam," replied Miſs Dorville, tears filling her eyes, "aſk me any thing that will not compleatly deſtroy all my proſpects of future happineſs, and it will be my delight to oblige you."

"WELL then, promiſe me not to proceed with a childiſh haſtineſs in this affair; let me ſee that you wiſh to oblige me in a matter ſo near my heart. A conſtitution ſo torn by illneſs as mine has been for a

number of years, cannot enable me to bear many ſuch ſhocks as I have lately received. Take care leſt you, by continual oppoſition, haſten the work which ſo many cruel diſorders in a few years will certainly effect. Nay, my Arabella, do not weep, but reſolve at leaſt to comply thus far with my intreaties; hear this morning what Lord Charles has to ſay, and do not deſtroy his hopes."

"How is it poſſible for me to do what you require? Would it not be treating him in a manner highly diſhonourable to my own character, to raiſe hopes which I never mean to anſwer? Dear Madam, ſpare me the pain of acting ſo contrary to what have ever been my principles."

"Well, Miſs Dorville, I have but one thing more to ſay: You are of opinion that I ought to give Maria every poſſible indulgence; I am well convinced of the contrary; but if you will act exactly according

cording to my direction, with reſpect to your next interview with his Lordſhip, you ſhall make what terms you pleaſe for her."

ARABELLA roſe in great agitation; "And will you forgive all that is paſſed, and receive the dear girl again to your arms?"

"I WILL do every thing that you wiſh; I will even part with Miſs Marſhall; but remember I expect a ſtrict compliance with the conditions."

"AND does it only depend upon my treatment of Lord Charles for one half hour? and will nothing further be expected from me?"

"No, my love; by that one inſtance of your kind compliance, you will moſt compleatly oblige me; but remember it muſt not be done by halves; he muſt leave you perfectly ſatisfied."

"I HAVE been ſo totally unaccuſtomed to deceit, and an exertion of it on any occaſion is ſo oppoſite to all my ideas of rectitude, that I confeſs it is very painful to me; but to reſtore my dear Maria to your favour and countenance, I will undertake the hard taſk, and venture to promiſe a full compliance with your deſire. I hope this conference is ſoon to take place, for I ſhall not know a moment's peace till it is over."

"THIS morning, I believe, his Lordſhip means to lay his titles and fortune at your feet. Pray, my Arabella, view him with an unprejudiced eye."

"I CAN promiſe nothing, dear Madam, but a ſtrict regard to our agreement; to go further is, indeed, out of my power."

AFTER another aſſurance of full liberty to act as ſhe pleaſed with reſpect to Maria, and a ſtrict charge about her behaviour this morning, Arabella left her mother's

ther's apartment, and proceeded to the breakfaſt parlour, where the reſt of the family had been ſome time waiting for her. A faint bluſh overſpread her face when ſhe met Lord Charles, which induced him to ſuſpect that his requeſt, with reſpect to her, had not been complied with; but as her countenance ſeemed to expreſs a degree of pleaſure, though mixed with apprehenſion, he was far from being diſpleaſed with the idea.

The tea things were ſcarce removed, before he requeſted her to indulge him with a repetition of their yeſterday's delicious ramble; and ſhe complied with an impatient kind of readineſs; anxious that her irkſome taſk ſhould be accompliſhed.

He firſt addreſſed her on the ſubject of his petition for Maria's free pardon, which he aſſured her was fully granted; but perceiving her expreſſions of pleaſure on hearing this leſs animated than he had rea-

ſon to expect, and that ſhe ſaid little in reply, he was perſuaded that ſhe wiſhed him to haſten to what more immediately concerned herſelf. Elated with this thought, he proceeded in the moſt paſſionate and reſpectful terms to offer himſelf to her acceptance, telling her that he had already obtained Mrs. Dorville's conſent for ſo doing, and it ſolely depended upon her to make him the happieſt, or moſt miſerable, of men.

She was ſilent.—What, indeed, circumſtanced as ſhe was, could ſhe ſay? Had ſhe been at liberty to purſue the dictates of her heart, her words would have flowed with their accuſtomed eaſe, but the language of falſhood ſhe had never learned. "Speak, charming Miſs Dorville," proceeded he; "tell me that I may hope to gain a prize which will make my future life one continued ſcene of bliſs."

To ſay ſomething was now neceſſary. "I thank your Lordſhip for the flattering opinion you entertain of me, but I—" ſhe ſtopped—ſhe was in extreme confuſion, and knew not how to proceed—

"SURELY I read my happineſs in that lovely face."

HE took her hand, which, painful as it was to her, ſhe durſt not withdraw.—"Confirm my hopes by one reviving ſmile."—She tried to oblige him; and the effort, though unaccompliſhed, was not unobſerved. "Enough, deareſt Madam; I will at this time preſs you no further. Perhaps I ought to expect no more at preſent from a lady of your perfect delicacy. I will write to my brother, who, I know, will rejoice in my felicity."

"Do not be too haſty, I beſeech you," cried Arabella, eagerly; "do not deceive—"

She ſtopped ſuddenly, in viſible agitation. "Fear not, lovelieſt of women," ſaid his Lordſhip: "eager and impetuous as my wiſhes are, I will in every thing be guided by you."

Arabella perceived that her ſilence had compleatly miſled him; and feeling the moſt uncomfortable conſciouſneſs of having acted, for the firſt time in her life, intentionally wrong, ſhortened her walk as much as poſſible, every word her delighted companion ſpoke increaſing her uneaſineſs; and the moment they entered the houſe, ſhe hurried up to her apartment in a ſtate of mind too painful to be deſcribed.—"Oh, Maria," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe threw herſelf on the ſopha, "what have I endured for thee to-day!—What a ſacrifice have I made thee!—All that I ſuffered before on thy account, is little when compared with it—How dreadful it is to act in oppoſition to what we know to be right!—

right!—Yet ſurely I am juſtified in what I have done, ſurely the good I ſhall obtain will more than compenſate.—But why do I feel this accuſer in my boſom, why do I appear unworthy in my own eyes?"

In this uncomfortable ſtate did ſhe paſs the remainder of the morning; and it was not without a conſiderable effort, that ſhe reſolved to go down to dinner; but fearing her mother ſhould have the leaſt room to urge her, in compleat compliance with the conditions, by which ſhe had ſo painfully purchaſed her ſiſter's forgiveneſs, ſhe put on as eaſy and chearful an air as ſhe poſſibly could, and went down at the uſual time. It was no ſmall relief to her to find Mr. Lewis, and two other of the neighbouring gentlemen, in the dining parlour. This enabled her to go through the time of dinner, and an hour after, with tolerable eaſe and ſpirit.

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As ſoon as the ladies retired into the drawing room, Mrs. Dorville requeſted her daughter's company to take an airing; and as ſoon as the coach appeared at the door, they ſet out, leaving Miſs Marſhall to make tea for the gentlemen, as Mrs. Dorville was reſolved to keep Arabella out the whole evening, leſt, as her engagement was now at an end, ſhe might undeceive Lord Charles, and prevent his writing to the Duke, which ſhe was eagerly anxious that he ſhould do, as it would, ſhe hoped, do much towards obliging Arabella to keep the engagement ſhe had forced her apparently to enter into.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XX.

SHEWS (THO' NOT IN A GREAT DEGREE) SOMETHING OF THE EFFECTS OF DISAPPOINTED LOVE IN THE BREAST OF ONE WHOSE HEART IS REALLY SUSCEPTIBLE OF THAT TENDER PASSION.

MISS Marſhall's intelligence was received with no ſmall degree of pleaſure at Llangorwel: Miſs Courteney was half wild with joy, and concluded ſhe had every thing ſhe could deſire before her. As they were only a family party, it was reſolved that this precious piece of intelligence ſhould be communicated to Sir George without loſs of time. Accordingly, as ſoon as dinner was removed, Mrs. Harley,

ley, with a careleſs air, aſked Miſs Courteney whether ſhe expected to be one of the bride maids at Beechwood? "At Beechwood!" cried Sir George, eagerly. "What wedding is likely to take place there?"—

"WHY, have you not heard that Lord Charles Blair has, in the courſe of a few days, found means to thaw the ice which has been ſo long accumulating in the boſom of Miſs Dorville, and prevailed upon her to promiſe him her hand?"

"I HAVE not before heard," replied the Baronet, "nor do I yet believe, it—Why, he is but an acquaintance of yeſterday!"

"O, THAT is very little to the purpoſe: when your grave ladies do take it into their heads to fall in love, it is always in a violent hurry, and generally at firſt ſight. Nay, you may ſhake your head, and look incredulous; but, take my word for it, his

his Lordſhip has made his propoſals in form, and been well received.—I have it from the beſt authority."

"I AM not in the leaſt ſurprized at it," ſaid Lady Anne: "I perceived an evident partiality in each when we were at Beechwood: did it eſcape your penetrating eye?"

"So entirely," anſwered he, "that I cannot yet perſuade myſelf of the reality of it."

"WELL," cried the widow, "you are the moſt determined ſceptic I ever met with: I will uſe no more vain efforts for your converſion, but refer you to facts, which will, in a ſhort time, ſpeak for themſelves."

"You cannot wonder," ſaid Mr. Courteney, "that any ſingle man ſhould be unwilling to believe Miſs Dorville compleatly diſpoſed of; faith I am ſurprized, and almoſt ſhocked, to think of it myſelf: our

our country will loſe its principal ornament when ſhe is gone."

"LORD, Sir," cried Julia, "it is a pity Lady Anne never gave you an opportunity of offering yourſelf to her acceptance.—I ſhould have been immenſely fond of ſo handſome a mother-in-law.—And then my run-a-way aunt, Maria, would have been ſo improving an example for me—My grand-mamma Dorville, too—Dear, what a number of new relations I ſhould have got all at once!"

"PRAY do not forget to number that bundle of dry bones, old Stanley, in the liſt," ſaid Mrs. Harley, laughing—"Who knows but he might have left you heir to his cabinet of natural curioſities?"

"NONE of them can vie with himſelf," cried Julia, "in compleat uglineſs, or perfect antiquity of appearance. One would ſwear he was born before the flood—I would rather have him in my poſſeſſion than

than the beſt preſerved mummy that ever came out of Egypt."

"WHEN I have next the pleaſure of ſeeing him," ſaid the Baronet, "ſhall I let him know the high eſtimation in which you hold him, and endeavour to ſettle about a purchaſe? I am ſure he would agree to any terms that could be propoſed by ſo fair a lady."

"PROVOKING creature!" cried Miſs Courteney: "When you talk to me of a purchaſe, let it be for yourſelf."

"WELL ſaid, Julia," cried Mr. Courteney: "a fair hint, and tolerably eaſy to be underſtood."

SIR George good humouredly joined in the laugh, and, after a little more chat of the ſame kind, left the room, and ordered his horſes to be got ready immediately, determining to go to Beechwood. Not that he gave credit to the report he had juſt heard; for, notwithſtanding all the art of his fair companions,

companions, he began fully to underſtand their characters, and had therefore no ſtrong reliance upon their veracity; but he was anxious to aſſure himſelf that it was a falſhoood; and was alſo extremely deſirous of ſeeing Arabella, which, as ſhe was out when he called the preceding day, he had not done ſince he had left her in ſo pitiable a ſituation.

On his arrival he was informed that Mrs. and Miſs Dorville were out; that Miſs Marſhall, Mr. Stanley, and ſome other gentlemen, had walked into the Park; but that Lord Charles Blair was in the library. He deſired the ſervant to inform his Lordſhip, that, if he was not particularly engaged, he would alight for a few minutes. As Sir George entered the room, Lord Charles was ſealing a letter; and ſo unuſual a glow of ſatisfaction was ſpread over his countenance, that the Baronet could not help obſerving it. "Surely,"

ly," ſaid he, "that letter is written to a highly favoured correſpondent, or is on a very pleaſing ſubject; for I never ſaw you look ſo animated in my life."

"WHY, the correſpondent is his Grace at Dunbeath caſtle; but, as to the ſubject, you have gueſſed luckily; it is ſo very pleaſing that I could fill volumes with it. You look ſurprized; and perhaps it will not diminiſh your wonder to be informed that I have juſt been telling my brother that I am the happieſt of men. Come, congratulate me, Brudenell; you cannot be at loſs to know on what occaſion."

"AND is it poſſible?" heſitated Sir George. "Have you really obtained ſo valuable a prize?

"REALLY," replied his Lordſhip. "Why, by your apparent conſternation, I ſuppoſe I have reaſon to congratulate myſelf that you were not beforehand with me: though, if you think as I did at your age,

age, you would not reſign your liberty to the moſt charming creature in the world. But I," ſhrugging up his ſhoulders, "am arrived at that time of life, when family reaſons begin to have weight; or, perhaps, even the beautiful Arabella might have failed to attach me; though I own I think her every way deſirable."

"SHE is, indeed, a moſt incomparable woman," ſaid the Baronet, ſighing; "and, in my opinion, it is never too early in life for the commencement of happineſs.—And you have her permiſſion to write to the Duke?"

"I had this morning; and I hope, in a fortnight, to be able to arrange every thing that is neceſſary previous to fixing the day."

"AND will Miſs Dorville think of that before her uncertainty with reſpect to her ſiſter is removed?"

"WHY,

"WHY, if we could find out where the little rambler is, it would no doubt be a great ſatisfaction to her; but (call me a vain fellow if you pleaſe) I have reaſon to believe ſhe is not the foremoſt object in her ſiſter's thoughts at this time. Female friendſhip is like the ſoft and beautiful luſtre of the moon; it ſhines, but communicates no warmth, and entirely diſappears when the glowing ſun of love ariſes."

"IF it is ſo in the preſent inſtance," ſaid Sir George, "I will give up the whole ſex as incapable of real attachment: it will greatly leſſen my regret—I mean, it will lower Miſs Dorville much in my opinion."

"WELL," replied his Lordſhip, "I ſhall never quarrel with a lady for wanting that portion of heroiſm which you ſeem to think ſo eſſential to the female character. Indeed, I feel infinitely grateful for the preference with which ſhe honours me."

"I COULD

"I COULD take no pleaſure," replied the Baronet, "in a preference which muſt leſſen her in my eſteem; and, for the honour of the lady in queſtion, I truſt you have deceived yourſelf."

"FAITH, Brudenell, you ſpeak with an aſperity very like that of a diſappointed man. If it is ſo, and the matrimonial humour does not wear off, let it be a leſſon to you, on ſuch another occaſion, not to ſtand reaſoning and conſidering, but put the queſtion at once: believe me, a lady thinks it the higheſt compliment you can pay her, let your acquaintance with her have been ever ſo ſhort."

"BUT, as I never mean to compliment any lady at ſo high a price in the riſk of my future happineſs, I do not intend to make matrimony a haſty buſineſs. Indeed, I believe," forcing a ſmile, "the *humour* is not likely very ſoon to come on again."

"A FAIR confeſſion," ſaid his Lordſhip. "It is unlucky (perhaps as much ſo for Miſs Dorville as for you) that you did not make up your mind a little earlier; for thou wouldeſt have been a far more energetic lover than myſelf, and ſhe has a little of the romantic about her."

SIR George aroſe, and rung the bell. "Shall I trouble you to preſent my regards to Mrs. Dorville and her daughter, whom, I fear, I ſhall not have an opportunity of ſeeing again before I leave Wales?"

"NAY," cried Lord Charles, "this is making too ſerious a matter of it: you are not going to leaves us?"

"I HAVE already ſtaid in Glamorganſhire much longer than I intended, and ſhall certainly quit Llangorwel in a day or two."

"A FEW minutes after, he cooly wiſhed Lord Charles all poſſible happineſs, and

mounting his horſe, rode ſlowly through the Park. Juſt as he was leaving it, Mrs. Dorville's coach appeared in view. Arabella ſaw, and waved her hand, ſeeming to invite his approach. He turned his horſe to do ſo; but her ſituation inſtantly recurring to his memory, he reſolved to avoid exchanging even another look with her, till he could do it with more compoſure; and making a reſpectful bow, rode off at full ſpeed.

As ſoon as they were out of ſight, he ſlackened his pace; he even ſtopped, and caſt many a "longing, lingering look" towards the ſpot where he had juſt ſeen her. He rode back, unconſcious of what he was doing; but the opening of the Park gate, by his ſervant, rouſed him; and once more turning his horſe, he rode full gallop till he reached Llangorwel.

Sir George gave his ſervant orders not to mention where he had been, feeling himſelf

himſelf unable, at that time, to encounter the raillery which he knew would be the conſequence of his viſit's being known in the family. His gravity, indeed, did not eſcape the animadverſion of the ladies; and ſome hints were given that they gueſſed the occaſion of it. He would have rallied in his turn, but never failed ſo entirely in his life: he felt an oppreſſive weight at his heart, which it was impoſſible for a moment to remove. After many fruitleſs efforts, he ceaſed to attempt a taſk ſo vain, and took an early opportunity of retiring for the night; not to ſleep, for that he was too miſerable to do; but to ruminate, at leiſure, on the entire ruin of his hopes, which, ſince his laſt interview with the lovely Arabella, had been ſanguine in a great degree. He tried to reconcile his mind to ſo heavy a diſappointment, but could only reſolve to act as his reaſon directed, and leave the reſt to the healing hand of time.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH SOME DEEP LAID SCHEMES, THE RESULT OF FEMALE ARTIFICE AND INVENTION, TO ENTRAP A HUSBAND, ARE MOST UNEXPECTEDLY FOILED.

SIR George aroſe at day-break, glad to leave a bed where he had found no reſt, and he took a ſolitary walk of ſeveral miles; in the courſe of which he again attempted to bring himſelf to a more reſigned ſtate of mind; but the ſucceſs of theſe efforts was not much to be boaſted of; his feelings were acute in a degree ſeldom to be found in the rougher ſex; and his whole ſoul was fixed on the fair object who now ſeemed to be torn from him.

At his return from his walk, he was informed that Mr. Courteney was gone out on particular buſineſs; and Lady Anne requeſted the favour of his company to breakfaſt in her dreſſing room. He went up immediately, and found the three ladies in high ſpirits; Miſs Julia frankly telling him, that it was his own fault that he had not a companion in his ſtroll, and that he poſſitively ſhould go no more alone.

The breakfaſt things had not been long removed, when a ſervant brought Mrs. Harley a packet. "It is from Beechwood," ſaid ſhe, looking at the direction. Sir George ſtarted at the ſound. As ſhe opened it, an encloſed paper dropped out, which Miſs Courteney took up. Mrs. Harley read with evident ſurprize; and when ſhe had finiſhed, "is it poſſible?" She, cried, "Dear Miſs Courteney, give me that paper."

"NAY, now you have excited my curioſity," replied Julia, "you muſt tell me who wrote it, and what it is about."

"THAT I cannot," anſwered the widow. "Do give it me."

"NOT till I ſee whether I know the hand." She opened it giddily, and ſuddenly exclaimed, "Heavens! it is Maria Dorville's. Now I will know all." She looked it over. "Well, I am glad they know where ſhe is; but how comes half the paper to be burnt away?"

"As you know ſo much," ſaid Mrs. Harley, gravely, "you muſt know all; and it would be in vain for me to attempt concealing it from Lady Anne and Sir George; I know I may depend upon their never letting it go further."

"WHAT can be the matter?" ſaid her Ladyſhip. "I proteſt your looks and words alarm me."

"WHY,

"WHY, it is nothing ſo very material neither; but you ſhould never have heard it from me, had not your mad daughter made the diſcovery. But I will read you both letters."

"SIR George looked at her with a ſteady attention; and ſhe began; "This is from Miſs Marſhall."

"DEAR Mrs. Harley, I have been ſo ſhocked and ſurprized at an incident which happened yeſterday, that I cannot help taking up my pen to acquaint you with it; though I would not have it communicated to any other creature for the world. I will never undeceive the admiring friends of Miſs Dorville, but as you already *know* her, I may unburden my mind to you, without leſſening her in the opinion of any one. I was yeſterday deſired, by Mrs. Dorville, to tell her daughter that ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak with her immediately on a matter of importance. Going into her

dreſſing room, to deliver my meſſage, I found her with a letter ſhe had juſt ſealed, and another open before her, which ſhe cloſed with great appearance of confuſion on my entrance. When I had told her the purpoſe of my coming, ſhe looked at it for a moment, and then ſetting it in a blaze, by touching it to the flame of the candle, threw it on the hearth, and quitted the room. I followed her a few ſteps; but a ſudden thought ſtriking me, I turned back, and was able to ſave juſt as much of the paper as I ſhall encloſe for your peruſal. Read it here,"

Mrs. Harley took up the fragment, which contained the following words, the flames having apparently deſtroyed all the former part.

" Once more I repeat, my dear Arabella, that I will accept of any tolerable conditions; for I ſincerely repent of my folly, and will endeavour to ſubmit to whatever

whatever my mother thinks proper for me till I come of age. Pray write very ſoon, and direct as above. I need not be aſhamed of the place I have retired to; and do not wiſh you to keep it a ſecret. Adieu, my dear ſiſter. Believe me your ever affectionate

MARIA DORVILLE."

Mrs. Harley then reſumed Miſs Marſhall's letter.

"It was the confuſion of Miſs Dorville, together with a glimpſe of the well known hand of Maria, which induced me to ſnatch the paper from the hearth; and I had no ſmall pleaſure in the peruſal of it, expecting the moſt agreeable conſequences to follow. In this hope I put it into my pocket, and ran to the two ladies, not doubting but it was the ſubject of their converſation: but what was my aſtoniſhment to hear Miſs Dorville lamenting to her mother, that now ſhe had conſented to re-

ceive the dear fugitive, they were utterly unable to diſcover her retreat. I was very near diſcovering the whole, by producing the fragment; but my knowledge of her extreme art, and my own dependent ſituation, determined me for, the preſent at leaſt, not to interpoſe. She ſtill carries on the ſame farce; for what purpoſe I cannot imagine, but no doubt ſhe has ſome end in view. I have not time to write another line; ſo adieu, and believe me your's ſincerely,

ELIZA MARSHALL."

ASTONISHMENT, grief, and anger, were ſtrongly pictured on the countenance of Sir George, while Mrs. Harley read. When ſhe had finiſhed, he requeſted a ſight of the papers; and while he was, with viſible emotion, looking them over, Lady Anne, and her daughter, expreſſed their ſurprize in the warmeſt terms; but Mrs. Harley ſaid, when ſhe reflected a little, her's vaniſhed;

vaniſhed; for ſhe had long known, from various circumſtances, that Miſs Dorville was a very artificial character.

When Sir George had done reading, he laid the papers on a table, and would have left the room without ſpeaking; but Mrs. Harley would not let him depart till ſhe had exacted a promiſe of ſecrecy.

As ſoon as he was gone, "Well," cried Lady Anne, "this incident has done more for us than all that we could have contrived; but I am really amazed; I never could have thought Miſs Dorville capable of ſuch duplicity.

She was anſwered by a loud laugh from both ladies—

"O, my dear mamma," ſaid Julia, "you have been as compleatly taken in as Brudenell. Why, Harley and I wrote every word of this wonderful letter and fragment."

"WELL, I vow," anſwered Lady Anne, "you deſerve beatification for your contrivance; and the execution of it was maſterly: I was, indeed, compleatly deceived. Julia will never make you amends for the trouble you take to humour her whim, which I now almoſt begin to think will end in ſomething ſerious."

"O, NEVER fear but it will," cried Miſs Courteney. "We have determined to leave nothing to chance; and conſidered that it was very probable Miſs Dorville might refuſe my Lord; and that if we did not contrive ſomething to ſet him againſt her, a match might have been made up at once."

"WELL, I admire your contrivance very much; nothing could have been better imagined, or executed; and I beg, Miſs Courteney, that you will exert yourſelf to give it full effect; if any thing is done, it muſt be ſoon."

"OH,

"Oh, never doubt that," replied the confident Julia. "When I have no rival to fear, it is impoſſible that I ſhould fail. Come, dear Harley, you muſt aſſiſt me in chuſing my dreſs; for I will poſſitively finiſh matters this very day: I never felt ſo certain of ſucceſs in my life."

"You did yourſelf great injuſtice when you admitted a doubt," replied Mrs. Harley. "Theſe men, with all their boaſted underſtanding, are mere puppets, and may be dandled about at pleaſure by a ſkilful mover of our ſex: and Sir George, in particular, is of ſo open and unſuſpicious a temper, that we ſcarce need bait the hook we intend him to ſwallow."

"I am of a very different opinion," ſaid Lady Anne. "I think he has infinite penetration; and, notwithſtanding the frankneſs of his diſpoſition, I would not only adviſe you to prepare a bait, but ſelect it moſt judiciouſly: he will not catch

at

at a common one, or he had been taken long ago. Do not let the hoiden be too predominant a feature in your appearance and manner to-day; try to model yourſelf into ſome reſemblance of his favourite at Beechwood."

"LORD, mother, would you have the inimitable Jordan give herſelf tragedy airs, and try to look like Siddons? What an aukward piece of formality would you make me? I ſuppoſe you would adviſe me to put on my hat exactly ſtraight, crop away a third of each feather, pin my handkerchief up to my throat, and drop a tuck in my peticoat. Then I muſt comb all the powder out of my frightful black hair, that it may reſemble her bright auburn; and thus compleatly accoutred, croſs my hands juſt ſo, before me, and ſpeak when I am ſpoken to."

"No, no; you are a ſtrange wild girl, and muſt, I believe, purſue your own humour;

mour; I always thought it became you; but the taſte of this man, who happens to have hit your fancy, ſeems different from that of the generality of the world; and, as far as you can, I think you would be wiſe to ſtudy it."

"WELL, Harley and I will try what is to be done. I ſhould not mind mortifying myſelf for a month or ſo; nay, I ſhould like vaſtly to marry him under the appearance of a wife, good creature, like Miſs Dorville, and then, the moment he was nooſed, aſtoniſh him with all the wild unbounded levity of Julia Courteney. O, how I ſhould enjoy his conſternation when he could not help himſelf!—Poor thing, how he would beat his head about the cage, and flutter his wings, while I, proud of the golden chain with which I was encircled, would take my pleaſure abroad, and enchant the world with my gaudy plumage.—But, come we are loſing time; I long

I long to engage; I pant for action: you, dear Harley, ſhall be my faithful ſquire, and arm me for the fight."

"WHY, Julia," ſaid her Ladyſhip, laughing, "you are wonderfully figurative; a new metaphor ariſes in every ſentence."

"I SEE how it muſt be with the poor Baronet," cried Mrs. Harley; "he ſurely falls to-day: the blow we have already given to his feelings muſt have weakened him, and he will be able to make very little reſiſtance. Come, we will not loſe another inſtant."

THE two ladies then adjourned immediately to Miſs Courteney's dreſſing room; and a bell inſtantly ſummoned Mrs. Jackſon; not to aſſiſt at their deliberations, but to perform the operation of hair dreſſing, under the ſpecial direction of Mrs. Harley; after which ſhe was diſmiſſed, that they might conſult more freely on what

what was further to be done. The doors of the wardrobe were thrown open, and a great part of its contents diſplayed upon the ſopha and chairs, that the beſt ſuited and moſt becoming might be ſelected. While they were thus employed, Julia, as the reader may well imagine, expreſſed much gratitude to her friend for planning the admirable ſcheme which they had that morning ſo happily executed, as well as for the preſent trouble ſhe gave herſelf, and hoped it would ſoon be in her power to prove how highly ſhe thought herſelf obliged.—"Suppoſe," ſaid Mrs. Harley, "I ſhould put your gratitude to the proof this very day; could you refuſe to make me a trifling ſacrifice?"

"Refuse," cried Miſs Courteney, "I can refuſe you nothing. Only name what you wiſh, and it ſhall certainly be done."

"Why, it is nothing more than your reſigning one of your humble danglers to me;

me; it will only be diſmiſſing him a few weeks before the time, when his hopes will neceſſarily end; and, I aſſure you, it will infinitely oblige me."

"WHO is it that you mean? ſurely not Lewis?"

"THE very man: I have a ſtrong inclination to have a little diverſion with him; and, perhaps, may even be tempted to try how I ſhould like to be miſtreſs of Aberhonnvy."

"SURE you are not ſerious: can you think of marrying ſo ſilly a wretch?"

"O, MEN of his capacity make the moſt comfortable harmleſs kind of huſbands in the world to a woman of ſpirit; and as every body knows how compleatly his ſiſter manages him, there can be no doubt but a wife might turn him round her finger."

"WELL, I am ready to forward your plan in any way that you deſire: it is quite lucky

lucky that he and his ſiſter dine here to-day: how ſhall I manage it? ſhall I tell him that you are dying for him? He is very gentle and compaſſionate, will be eaſily melted, and wont let you pine long."

"I THANK you," replied the widow, "for your kind offers and aſſurances; but that is not the way in which I wiſh you to proceed: if I could once get you out of his head, you bewitching creature, I ſhould have nothing to fear."

"BUT how is that to be done?" cried Julia, laughing.

"WHY, you muſt reſolve abſolutely to affront him: you know that is no very difficult matter, for all weak people are apt to take offence."

"O, IF that is all, I would not deſire better ſport than to oblige you: I love, in my very ſoul, to be abominably rude. A few becoming airs, and a ſcornful toſs, gives ſuch dignity to the countenance: mine,"

mine," looking in the glaſs, " was formed for all the high bred inſolence of exalted rank. But I muſt contrive to get this buſineſs finiſhed out of the hearing of Sir George. You know he is an admirer of meekneſs, humility, and all thoſe odious qualities which I deteſt. Go, dear Harley, and get yourſelf dreſſed, that we may be ready to receive the Lewiſes, who may poſſibly come before dinner time, and give us the wiſhed for opportunity.

Away flew Mrs. Harley; and, in little more than an hour, both ladies entered the drawing room, each in her own opinion compleatly armed for conqueſt, and remained in deep conſultation about their further proceedings, when Mr. Lewis's chaiſe appeared. " Now, dear creature," cried the widow, " turn this poor little ſoul over fully and entirely to me, and depend upon large aſſiſtance from me in your affair. The ſacrifice I aſk is no more than that

that of the ſucceſsful purchaſer of a lottery ticket, who gives twenty pounds to ſecure the poſſeſſion of as many thouſands."

THE Lewiſes entered, and were received with cold civility by Miſs Courteney, but with a ſuperabundance of polite attention by her friend, who drew a chair near to that of Miſs Lewis, and addreſſed her converſation entirely to her. Julia walked to a diſtant window, and, as ſhe expected, was followed by her admirer. "Delightful weather, Madam," cried he, rubbing his hands, that was the ſubject he generally opened with it. "Is it?" ſaid Miſs Courteney, ſtaring him full in the face. "How came you to make ſo wonderful a diſcovery this morning?"

"NAY," replied he, colouring, "I ſee nothing ſo extraordinary in it."

"YET you thought I could not poſſibly have found it out without your obliging information.

information. But ſome people love to be officious, even in ſuch trifles as theſe."

"I PROTEST, Madam, I have offended you without intending it: I hoped we underſtood each other better."

"UNDERSTOOD each other better! I don't know what you mean, Sir; I never underſtood you to be any thing more to me than a mere common acquaintance; ſo I beg I may hear no more of theſe ſtrange inſinuations."

"I AM now, indeed, amazed," cried the poor Squire. "Sure you cannot mean what you ſay?"

"YOU may aſſure yourſelf that I do. You could never have had the folly to imagine that I would tie myſelf for life to a Welſh mountaineer, and ſpend all my days among ſavages! The very idea chills my blood."

"VERY well, Madam: you may certainly do as you pleaſe; but neither my family

or fortune have been always thought contemptible; and you have not always talked at this rate."

"I HOPE you do not mean to insinuate that I ever gave the least encouragement to your rediculous pretensions. In this horrid part of the world one is obliged to associate with the *natives* for want of other society, as I suppose one must do with bears if one lived in Greenland, but I think I could never be very fond of the rough animals."

"YOU either mean this for wit, or intend to insult me, Madam. Which ever it may be, I assure you it very ill becomes you; and if you—"

"PRITHEE, good man, let me have no more of thy remonstrances. If thou wantest a wife, get thee one of thy own country women, who will be glad to exchange her blue apron for a white one, and partake of the leeks in thy garden; one

one who will ſtudy oeconomy, and keep thy houſe in order."

THE entrance of Sir George, at this inſtant, checked the torrent of words which would probably have continued to flow from the lips of Miſs Courteney for ſome time longer, to her own great amuſement, and the utter conſternation of her aſtoniſhed auditor. But the moment ſhe perceived him, ſhe ceaſed to ſpeak; the ſatirical archneſs of her countenance changed to a ſmile of complacency, and ſhe advanced to meet him with the gentleſt condeſcenſion. Lady Anne and Mr. Courteney entered ſoon after; and the converſation took a general turn. Every one joined except poor Lewis, who was full of wonder and reſentment. The extreme attention which was paid to the Baronet by his quondam miſtreſs, did not paſs unnoticed by him; and it was with no ſmall degree of pleaſure that he heard him declare

clare his intention of leaving Llangorwel the following day.

An electrical ſhock could not have had a more ſudden and violent effect upon the three ladies than this fearful piece of intelligence, not one of them could articulate a word for ſeveral minutes. By degrees, however, Lady Anne recollected herſelf, and remonſtrated very warmly againſt this cruel reſolution. Mr. Courteney and Julia joined with equal earneſtneſs; but all their intreaties were to no purpoſe; he was poſitively determined to depart the next morning.

Guess, gentle reader, gueſs what was the diſappointment of Lady Anne and her daughter; and, if thou art capable of feeling for misfortunes of this kind, ſympathiſe with their diſtreſs. The day was inſupportably tedious to all the party, except Miſs Lewis, who was in her uſual

good ſpirits, and could not imagine what made the reſt of the party ſo ſtupid. At length the hour of ſeparation arrived: the Lewiſes drove away; and Mr. Courteney and Sir George rode out, which left the ladies at liberty to indulge and vent their ill humour. What a change had taken place in their feelings towards each other ſince the morning! Every one was willing to attribute the failure of her hopes to the miſmanagement of the others. The widow was particularly anxious to defend the policy of her deep laid ſcheme, and declared there was not another man in England who could have eſcaped from her toils.

Lady Anne warmly replied, that ſhe thought there had been too much artifice uſed on the occaſion, and particularly in the laſt affair, which ſhe, from the very firſt, diſapproved, and wondered how Miſs

Miſs Courteney could conſent to a plan which ſhe might eaſily have foreſeen the effect of. Julia ſaid it was entirely Mrs. Harley's doing; ſhe was ſure ſhe ſhould never have thought of ſuch a *round-about* ſcheme; but ſhe truſted implicitly to her ſuperior age and experience. Mrs. Harley was thoroughly provoked; and would have anſwered in a high tone, but certain prudential reaſons, which never failed to have their full weight in her mind, reſtrained her; and ſhe condeſcended meekly to plead the goodneſs of her intentions, and lament that ſhe had not been able to inſure ſucceſs.

NOTWITHSTANDING this moderation and ſweetneſs, the altercation was not ſpeedily ended. But I will purſue it no further; my reader will probably be as willing to fly from a ſcene ſo unpleaſant, as I can be to conduct them again to the

abode of the amiable Arabella, who, whatever her diſtreſſes may be, is, we truſt, incapable of being rendered ſo compleatly miſerable, as the failure of their favourite ſcheme had made the triumviatre at Llangorwel.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXII.

SHEWS ARABELLA'S MIND TO BE IN A GREAT STATE OF PERTURBATION, OCCASIOND BY THE INSIDIOUS ARTS THAT ARE MADE USE OF TO MAKE HER MARRY AGAINST HER INCLINATION.

MRS. Dorville, in the courſe of the long airing which ſhe took with her daughter, employed all her powers of reaſoning and perſuaſion, of threats and promiſes, to induce her to lend a favourable ear to the addreſſes of her noble lover, whoſe advantages and perfections ſhe placed in the moſt brilliant light before her eyes; but with what ſucceſs, I leave thoſe to judge who have felt the

force of a tender, paſſionate, firſt attachment. To ſuch I need not ſay that ſhe was diſguſted by the profuſion of praiſes which were beſtowed upon one who ſeemed to ſtand between her and happineſs, and even ſickened at the idea of again beholding him.

ARABELLA, fully ſenſible that her partiality to Sir George Brudenell was the grand obſtacle to, and the ſtrongeſt argument againſt, her compliance with her mother's wiſhes, would have owned it; and was more than once very near opening her whole heart upon the ſubject; but Mrs. Dorville perceived her intention, and ſtill, as ſhe drew near that point, prevented her. Diſcouraged by this artful proceeding, ſhe altered her plan, and reſolutely acquainted her mother with her abſolute determination to refuſe Lord Charles; and painting, in the livelieſt colours, the extreme uneaſineſs ſhe had ſuffered in not being

being able to follow the dictates of her heart in her converſation with him that morning, declared it her firm reſolution to take the earlieſt opportunity of undeceiving him.

This brought upon her a diſtreſſing load of remonſtrances and intreaties; but though her mother had the power of rendering her very unhappy, ſhe could not prevail with her, by any means, to advance a ſtep further in the path of deceit, which ſhe had already found ſo exquiſitely painful. But one argument now remained, and Mrs. Dorville reſolved to give that its full force. "I am extremely grieved, my love," ſaid ſhe, "to find your ſtrange reluctance to this alliance ſo deeply rooted; but though convinced it would, in the end, make you happy, I would give up my own judgment to indulge your caprice, was there not another, and more material, circumſtance to be conſidered. Your ho-

nour is engaged; and, if you perſiſt in your preſent reſolution, (which heaven forbid,) muſt be forfeited, and your character held up to view in the muſt injurious light. Lord Charles, perfectly ſatisfied with your reception of his propoſal, and ſecure of mine and your uncle's approbation, loſt not an inſtant in writing to the Duke; ſo that any objections on your part, will now ſtamp you, in the opinion of the world, a mere idle, capricious flirt; a character which you, in common with all the ſenſible and reſpectable part of mankind, muſt own to be compleatly deſpicable."

ARABELLA was ſilent, and her mother's hopes roſe in proportion to the anguiſh that was painted on her countenance. At length claſping her hands, ſhe paſſionately exclaimed, "I am, indeed, taken in the toils! I ſee the whole ſcheme which was planned to make me miſerable: from whom

whom it originated I am at no loſs to gueſs; but, ah, Madam! how could you be induced to take a part in it! How could a mother ſo cruelly contribute to render her child unhappy!"

"You ſee things in a falſe light, or you would not talk thus," anſwered the impenetrable Mrs. Dorville. "Honour and happineſs are now within your reach; but depend upon it, if you reject the firſt, the latter will fly from you: ſo conſider well what you do: your ſiſter's welfare is involved in your's: take care that you do not fall to her level, inſtead of raiſing her to your's."

"ARABELLA had never felt ſo truly miſerable before; ſhe ſeemed bewildered a labyrinth, from which there was no road to eſcape. She felt herſelf incapable of determining on any thing, and when preſſed by her mother to declare her reſolution, confeſſed that ſhe was then unable to form

any. In this ſituation did ſhe arrive at the Park; the ſight of Sir George, and the ſlight manner in which he paſſed them, not contributing to leſſon her uneaſineſs.

Mrs. Dorville readily diſpenſed with her attendance at ſupper, and pleaded indiſpoſition as an excuſe to his Lordſhip, who now thought he had a right to be indulged with her ſociety, and was with difficulty prevented from aſking for half an hour's converſation with her in her dreſſing room, which requeſt might have brought on an explanation greatly dreaded by the ſeniors of the family.

Poor Arabella paſſed a ſleepleſs night; it was ſeveral hours before ſhe could ſettle her plan of conduct; but at length, after weighing, as impartially as poſſible, all that could be ſaid on either ſide, ſhe finally determined to lay her ſituation entirely

entirely open to Lord Charles, and demand, from his candour and humanity, a releaſe from the involuntary engagement which ſhe had appeared to enter into.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH A VERY IMPORTANT VISITOR AT BEECHWOOD MEETS AN UNEXPECTED DISAPPOINTMENT AND MORTIFICATION.

MRS. Dorville, impatient to know what her daughter's determination had been, left her apartment much earlier than uſual the following morning, and joined the party down ſtairs before breakfaſt was removed. But ſhe could form no judgment from the behaviour of Arabella; though ſhe perceived that her reſolution was fixed by her perfect compoſure, and ſhe hoped according to her wiſh, by the attentive

attentive manner in which ſhe treated his Lordſhip, who watched her every look and movement. Among a number of indifferent matters, Sir George's viſit, the preceding day, and intended ſudden departure, was mentioned by Lord Charles, and the meſſage that he left for Mrs. Dorville and her daughter, delivered, perhaps, even in cooler terms than thoſe he had himſelf made uſe of. It was too much for Arabella; the extreme weak ſtate of her ſpirits rendered her incapable of concealing her emotion; her complexion varied; her hand ſhook; and ſhe roſe from her chair, though ſcarcely able to ſupport herſelf till ſhe reached a window, to which Lord Charles followed her. "I fear, deareſt Madam," cried he, "you experience ſome return of your laſt night's complaint; you ſeem ready to faint!"

"I BELIEVE I want air," replied ſhe, in a tremulous voice. He threw up the

ſaſh

the ſaſh. Mrs. Dorville ſent Miſs Marſhall with ſalts, which a little revived her. She declined all offers of help from his Lordſhip and the governeſs, who were equally officious about her, and by degrees grew better.

" THINGS were in this ſituation when Mr. Stanley returned from his morning ride. He approached his niece with a countenance more expreſſive of anger than concern. " Why, what can be the matter? always in the penſoroſo ſtile! With every poſſible happineſs in proſpect or poſſeſſion, do you ſtill give way to this fooliſh melancholy?"

" MISS Dorville has been very ill," replied his Lordſhip. " I feared we could not have ſaved her from fainting."

" FIE, fie, my dear," cried her uncle; " vapours were very faſhionable in the laſt age, but now, I aſſure you, they are quite vulgar; both fainting fits and hiſterics are entirely exploded."

LORD

Lord Charles ſmiled; and Arabella anſwered, "Were it in my power, I would gladly be excuſed from a weakneſs ſo troubleſome to my friends, and ſo unpleaſant to myſelf: but my conſtitution does not ſeem calculated for the preſent times."

"You ſay true, Madam," replied my Lord: "the feelings of the generality of people are ſolely confined to themſelves; few hearts are capable of ſuch expanſion as your's."

"Well, if your Lordſhip is ſatisfied," cried Mr. Stanley, bowing obſequiouſly, "I have no right to be otherwiſe. I have not the ſmalleſt doubt but my niece will, under your protection, become every thing her friends can wiſh. Much muſt be allowed for a three years retirement in Wales; at her time of life eſpecially, the diſadvantage muſt be infinite; but a few months ſpent in the beſt company, in a character

character ſo highly reſpectable as that of your wife, will give her that dignity of mind and manners which ſo exalted a character requires."

ARABELLA looked all confuſion and diſtreſs. "She is, in my eyes, all perfection," ſaid Lord Charles, taking her hand, which ſhe had not ſtrength ſufficient to withdraw. "May ſhe ever continue thus amiable, and propitious to my ſuit, and I ſhall be moſt happy."

ARABELLA ſummoned all her fortitude. "Shall I ſpeak with your Lordſhip for half an hour this morning? I have ſome circumſtances to communicate which now oppreſs my mind: indeed, I ſhall be miſerable till I have explained myſelf."

"LET it be this inſtant then, dear Madam: do not ſuffer a moment's uneaſineſs that I can be inſtrumental in relieving."

SHE

SHE gave him her trembling hand, and he led her to the library. She was greatly agitated; and, cool as his Lordſhip's temper naturally was, he looked alarmed. "Now, charming Miſs Dorville," ſaid he, as ſoon as ſhe was ſeated, "inform me if there is any thing that I can do to make you happier, and command whatever is within my power."

ARABELLA then, with more fortitude and calmneſs than ſhe thought herſelf capable of exerting, laid open her whole ſituation before him, confeſſing a prepoſſeſſion in favour of another, but carefully avoiding to give the remoteſt hint that could lead him to diſcover who his fortunate rival was. She concluded with telling him how highly ſhe ſhould ever eſteem herſelf indebted to him, if he would generouſly give up all pretenſions to one who could never make a proper return to his affection.

HE

He was ſilent for ſome minutes after ſhe had ceaſed ſpeaking, and then, with a ſtatelineſs which was natural to him, "There is but one line of conduct poſſible to a man of honour in my ſituation: I will never endeavour to obtain the hand of any lady whoſe inclinations point a different way. It is only to you, Madam, that I will own how greatly I am diſappointed. Your relations have uſed me diſhonourably; and if Mr. Stanley was a younger man, I would let him know it in another way. A man of my rank might have expected treatment of a different kind."

He walked haſtily about the room. "I own the truth of what your Lordſhip ſays," replied Arabella, "and moſt ſincerely repent of the part I was induced to take in the affair."

"I entirely acquit you, Madam; in common humanity you could not have acted

acted otherwiſe; but your uncle is very much to blame. A circumſtance which, an hour ago, gave me great pain, now, however, affords me ſome conſolation. The letter which I wrote to the Duke was delayed by a miſtake of my ſervant, and ſtill remains in his poſſeſſion; ſo I ſhall eſcape the mortification of appearing little in his eyes,

"I MOST ſincerely rejoice to hear it," replied Arabella: "that fortunate accident, I hope, removes all that was diſagreeable in the affair."

"No, Madam; that is not poſſible; my feelings are hurt as well as my delicacy offended: I was unfortunate in fixing my affections upon a lady whoſe heart was already diſpoſed of. I will not aſk why my happy rival does not claim the bleſſing which awaits him; all that concerns you muſt now ceaſe to intereſt me.

HE pauſed, and ſhe continued ſilent.

"I CANNOT

"I CANNOT think, with any patience, of ſeeing Mr. Stanley. Will you be obliging enough to make what opologies you judge neceſſary to Mrs. Dorville for my ſudden departure, and I will ſet out towards Scotland this morning."

"I AM not ſurprized at your reſolution," anſwered Arabella; "nor will I attempt to oppoſe it. I only intreat you to judge candidly of a family by whom you are in a high degree reſpected. Perhaps time and reflection may moderate your reſentment, and you will ſtill number us among your friends."

"I THANK you, Madam, for your condeſcenſion in requeſting it. For the ſake of my own peace of mind I muſt endeavour to behold your perfections in a leſs powerful light than I have hitherto done; but I ſhall ever continue to admire and regard the only lady in the world to whoſe attractions I would have ſurrendered my liberty.

liberty. I will detain you no longer: this has been a painful eclairciſſement to us both, and you will doubtleſs be glad to retire. Adieu, Madam," reſpectfully preſſing her hand. "All that I have now to intreat is, that you will not mention my intended journey; for I would avoid exchanging a word on the ſubject with any perſon of the family except yourſelf."

ARABELLA gladly withdrew to her own apartment; and Lord Charles gave immediate orders for his horſe to be got ready, and one of his grooms to attend him, while his valet ſtayed to direct and aſſiſt in preparing his baggage, carriage, &c. which were to follow with all poſſible expedition.

IN a quarter of an hour he ſet out, according to his wiſh, without even ſeeing one of the family; by whom he thought himſelf highly injured. Pride was his predominant paſſion; and he thought it would be derogating from the dignity of his

his rank and character, to expoſtulate with a man for whom he had never entertained any high degree of eſteem, and, ſince he had offended him, beheld as an object of the loweſt contempt.

BEFORE he had proceeded many miles from Beechwood, calm conſideration began to take place of paſſion and reſentment. Perhaps, thought he, as he ſlowly rode along, I ought rather to congratulate myſelf on having eſcaped this connection, than repine that my wiſhes are fruſtrated. This low man would have been a troubleſome, and even a mortifying, attendant, in the character of a near relation; and heaven knows how many other couſins might have ſtarted up to teaze me: for, though I ſhould have had nothing to fear on the ſide of the Dorvilles, the Stanleys are mere muſhrooms, and of courſe a numerous tribe. The lady herſelf, is, indeed, charming; her beauty, underſtanding, and

accompliſhments,

accompliſhments, would do honour to any ſtation; but who can tell what an alteration might have been made in her, by an introduction into all the folly and diſſipation of a world, whoſe idol ſhe would have been?

After all, a man's honour is never ſo ſafe as in his own keeping. The ladies of this age are, in general, ill calculated for wives; and if a woman is naturally good and amiable, the faſhionable manners are ſuch, and the force of example ſo powerful, that it is little leſs than a miracle if ſhe eſcapes contamination.

Thus did this philoſophical lover conſole himſelf for the loſs of the lovely Arabella: every ſtage that he travelled, he felt himſelf more reconciled to his diſappointment; and, before he had been many days in Scotland, his attention was entirely engroſſed by the illneſs of his brother, which ended a few weeks after in his death.

This event, though he was not unmoved at the time, gave him no very laſting concern. The title and eſtates, which he acquired, would have been ſufficient to conſole a *reaſonable* man under a heavier affliction; and he took poſſeſſion of them with exactly the degree of ſorrow uſual upon ſuch occaſions.

We will now leave his Grace to receive the homage of his numerous dependents, and enjoy his newly acquired dignity, and return to Beechwood, where matters were in a leſs comfortable ſituation than, notwithſtanding all appearances, we hope hereafter to find them.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.